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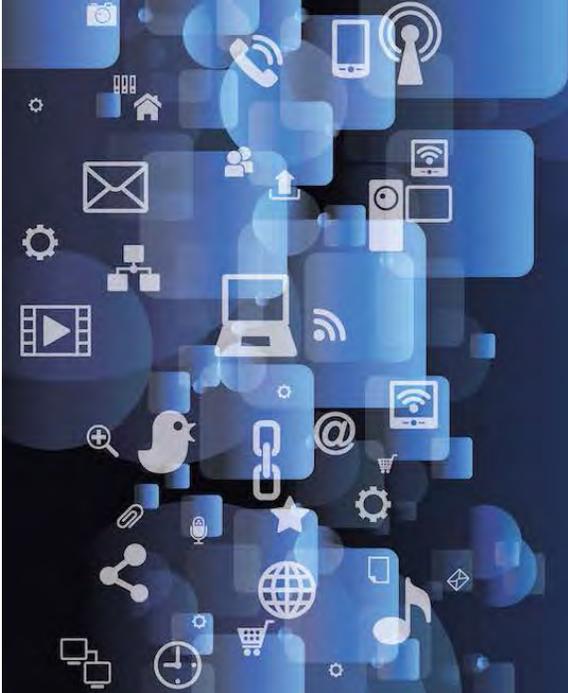
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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Top Producer CRM

TECHNOLOGY

TopProducer CRM connects prospect data with business best practices

Integration and interface are top qualities of TopProducer



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 2, 2015

Editor's note: This week, Inman is launching a brand-new daily series of articles focused specifically on evaluating the technology you use in your real estate business.

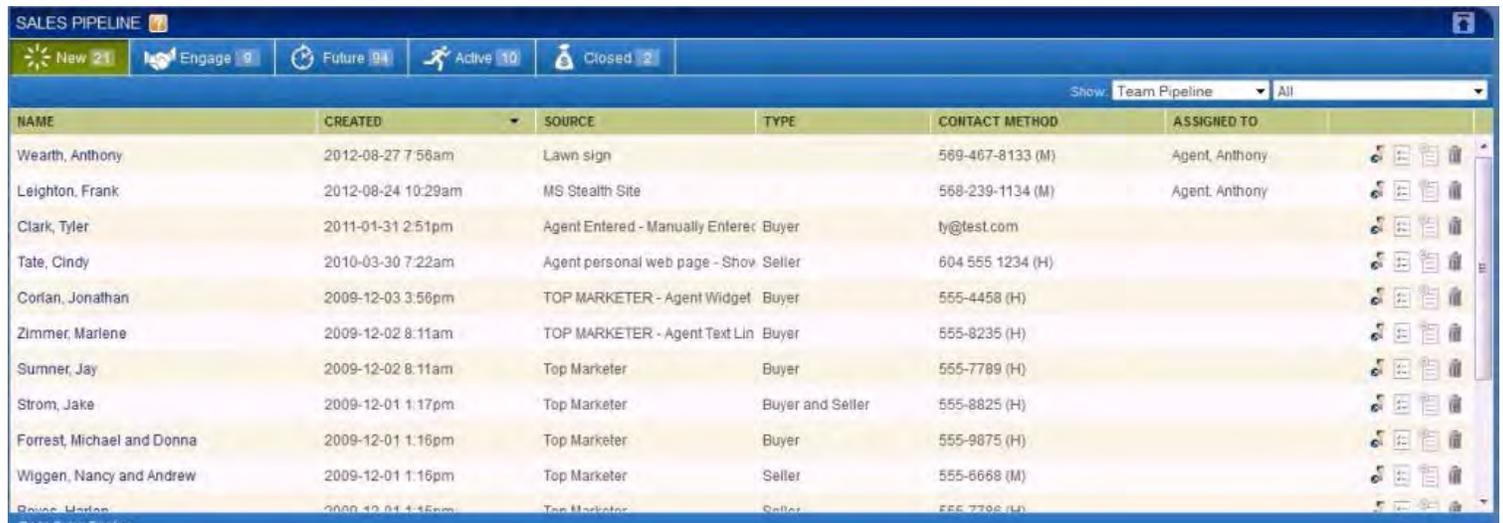
Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

Most people would agree that the person who knows it all isn't that much fun to be around.

And that's who I think of when initially describing TopProducer CRM (customer relationship manager). Whatever question you have about its capabilities, there's a feature with an answer. When it comes to software, an answer for everything often translates into paying for features you won't use.

However, when it comes to getting a handle on the ever-malleable world of real estate lead management, it's good to know that omnipotent friend of yours is available anywhere, any time.

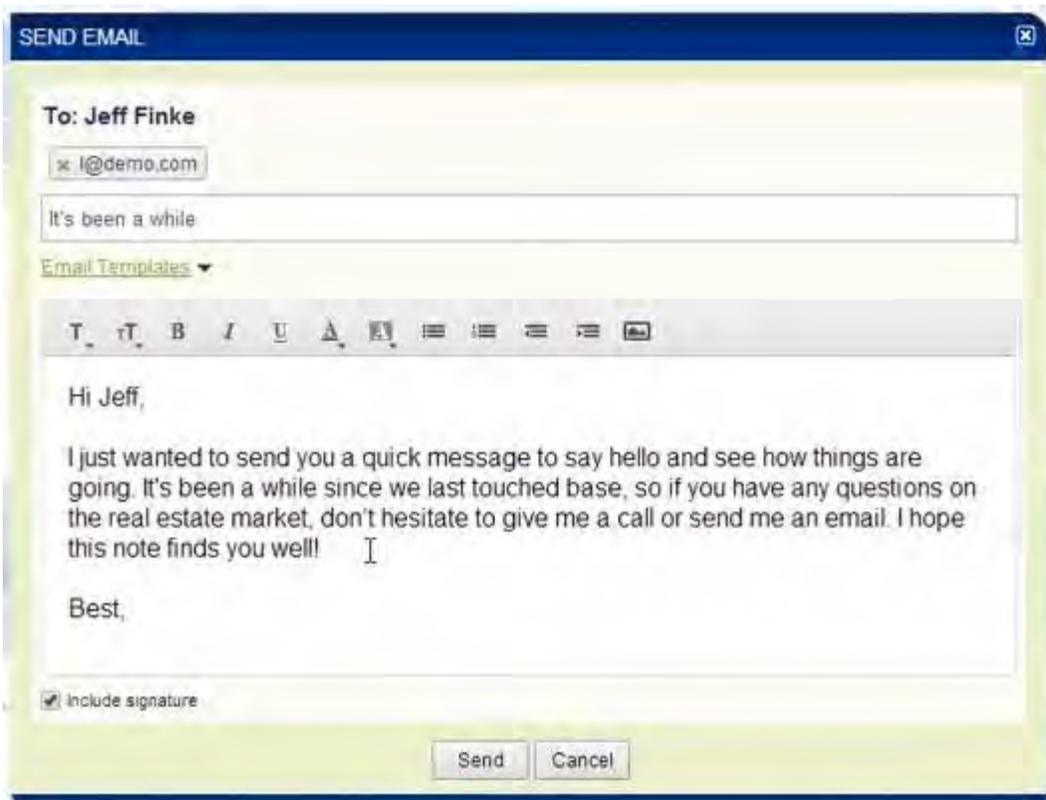


NAME	CREATED	SOURCE	TYPE	CONTACT METHOD	ASSIGNED TO
Wearth, Anthony	2012-08-27 7:56am	Lawn sign		569-467-8133 (M)	Agent, Anthony
Leighton, Frank	2012-08-24 10:29am	MS Stealth Site		568-239-1134 (M)	Agent, Anthony
Clark, Tyler	2011-01-31 2:51pm	Agent Entered - Manually Entered	Buyer	ty@lest.com	
Tate, Cindy	2010-03-30 7:22am	Agent personal web page - Show	Seller	604 555 1234 (H)	
Corlan, Jonathan	2009-12-03 3:56pm	TOP MARKETER - Agent Widget	Buyer	555-4458 (H)	
Zimmer, Marlene	2009-12-02 8:11am	TOP MARKETER - Agent Text Lin	Buyer	555-8235 (H)	
Sumner, Jay	2009-12-02 8:11am	Top Marketer	Buyer	555-7789 (H)	
Strom, Jake	2009-12-01 1:17pm	Top Marketer	Buyer and Seller	555-8825 (H)	
Forrest, Michael and Donna	2009-12-01 1:16pm	Top Marketer	Buyer	555-9875 (H)	
Wiggen, Nancy and Andrew	2009-12-01 1:16pm	Top Marketer	Seller	555-6668 (M)	
Boice, Marlon	2009-12-01 1:15pm	Top Marketer	Seller	555-7788 (H)	

The sale

If there's a euphemism for "collaborating with other software," it exists in TopProducer's training content. This on-premise and mobile CRM platform is connected, linked and integrated cloud-wide.

Because real estate agents often secure leads in multiple ways in multiple places, it's easy to be spread data-thin. (Data loses value if not consolidated.) So TopProducer funnels multiple tributaries of prospect data into a single, manageable reservoir of information. For example, it can shake hands with Gmail Outlook, and even your social media profiles.



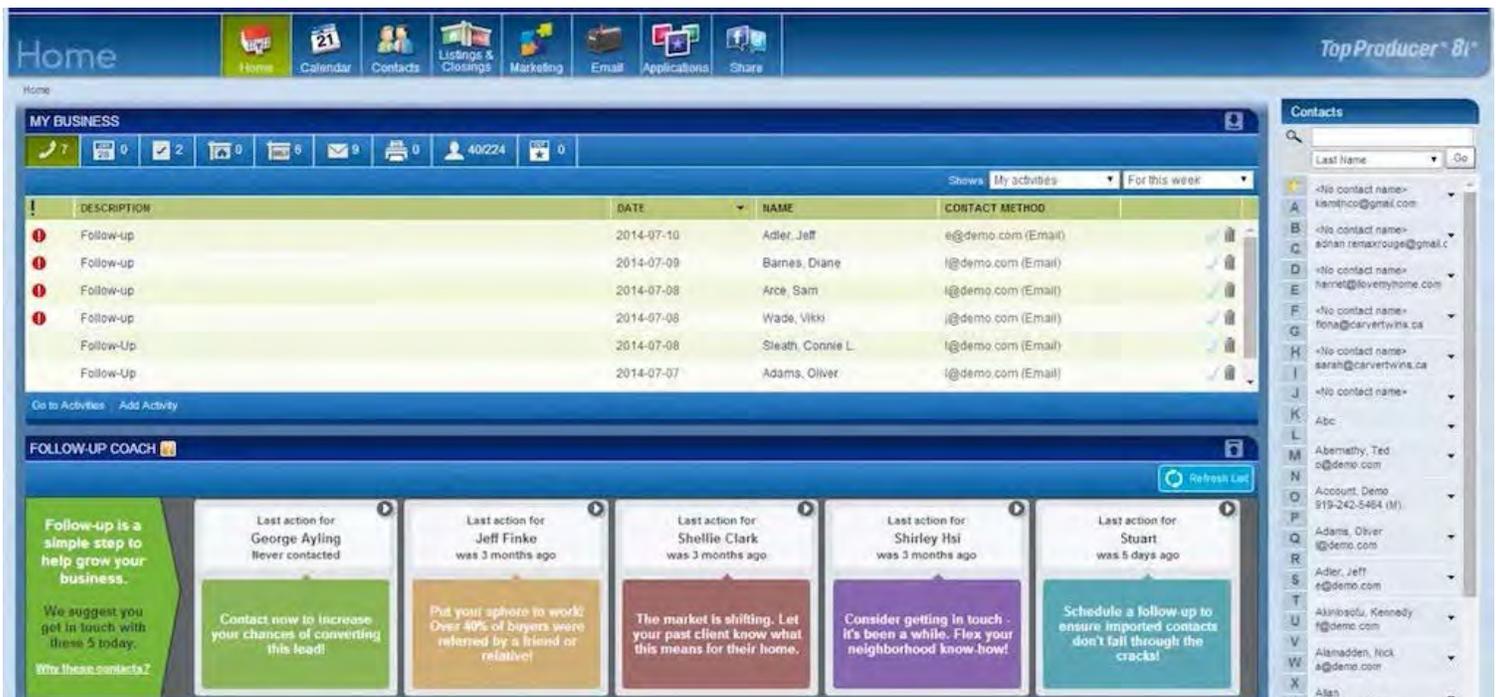
Even better is the platform's ability to reach Google Drive and Dropbox. Online document workflow has become important — if not vital — given the pace of modern mobile business and the inability of paper-based processes to efficiently propagate data. For TopProducer users, this means you can pull critical transaction content from a central source, instead of manually filtering through various desktop folders to locate the most recent version of a listing agreement.

This CRM also excels in lead management. Prospects generated from listing sites, like realtor.com and Zillow, become part of an automated reminder and lead development engine. This materializes in the interface as a feature called “contextual coaching.”

Contextual coaching assists users with when and how to communicate with leads. If you make a call, the system generates a prompt asking you to record the details. Was it successful? Do you want to take notes? It then asks you to select a method and time to get back in touch. Integrating these crucial steps into a single action takes away one's propensity to “do it later,” and bolsters good sales habits.

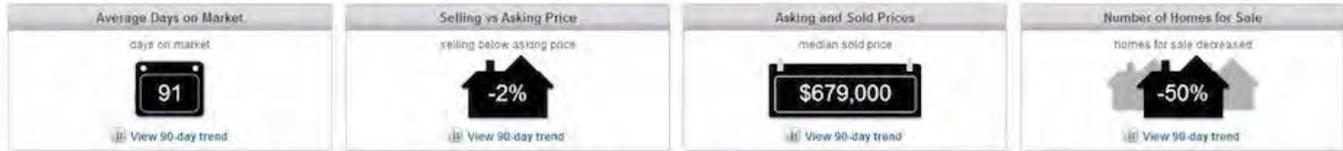


Smartphones and tablets have introduced us to visually bold, fluid methods of interaction with our devices and data. Traditional CRMs are inherently clinical and Excel-like, great at providing data, but typically terrible at presenting it. TopProducer's interface is sharp and easy; it makes for a compelling user experience.



There are a number of seemingly useful appendages that come a la carte, but like tacos without guacamole and hot sauce, you can't have the meal without the sides. In this case, the chef's specials are a Market Snapshot, a hyperlocal market data aggregator; and FiveStreet, a lead cultivation tool. Both will be essential bolt-ons for getting the most of your investment.

Your Market Snapshot for 11722 NE 101st PI as of July 7, 2014 at 12:12 PM.



Have a Question? Get in touch. I'm happy to help. [Email me](#) or call (425)555-2734

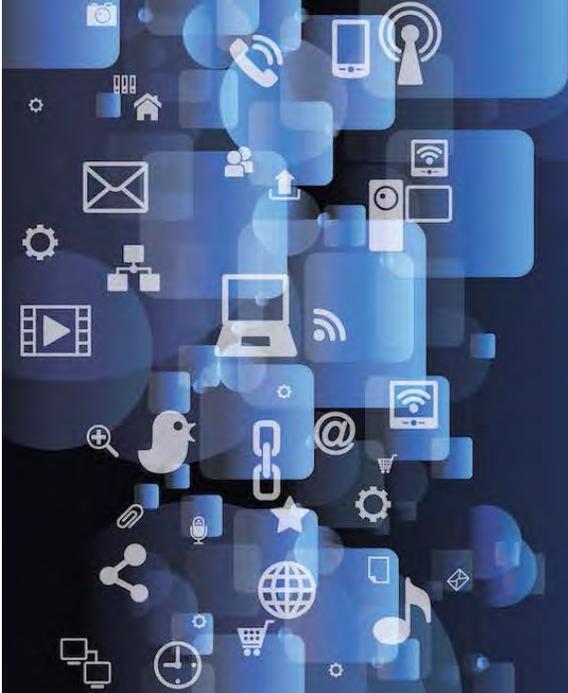
Listings

Address	Price	Dr Market	Status
11411 NE 102nd Street, 4 beds, 3 baths, 2240 sq. ft.	\$599,950 \$230 / S.F.	28 days	FOR SALE
10610 110th Place NE, 4 beds, 3 baths, 1520 sq. ft.	\$120,000 \$211 / S.F.	272 days	SOLD
9436 110th Avenue NE, 4 beds, 3 baths, 3070 sq. ft.	\$726,000 \$236 / S.F.	48 days	FOR SALE
11404 NE 106th Lane, 3 beds, 4 baths, 3130 sq. ft.	\$481,000 \$154 / S.F.	488 days	FOR SALE

Show: Recently Sold | New Listing (< 14 days) | For Sale (15+ days)

The close

Ultimately, no software package in the world can make you use it. Good CRMs are hard to find and usually even more tedious to use. With visually ergonomic interfaces and smart data partnerships, I think the TopProducer team is making us forget about what a CRM is and showing us what a CRM should be.



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Canva.com

TECHNOLOGY

Create content, not clickbait, with Canva

Canva can help marketing-savvy agents earn a social media audience



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 3, 2015

Editor's note: This week, Inman is launching a brand-new daily series of articles focused specifically on evaluating the technology you use in your real estate business.

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

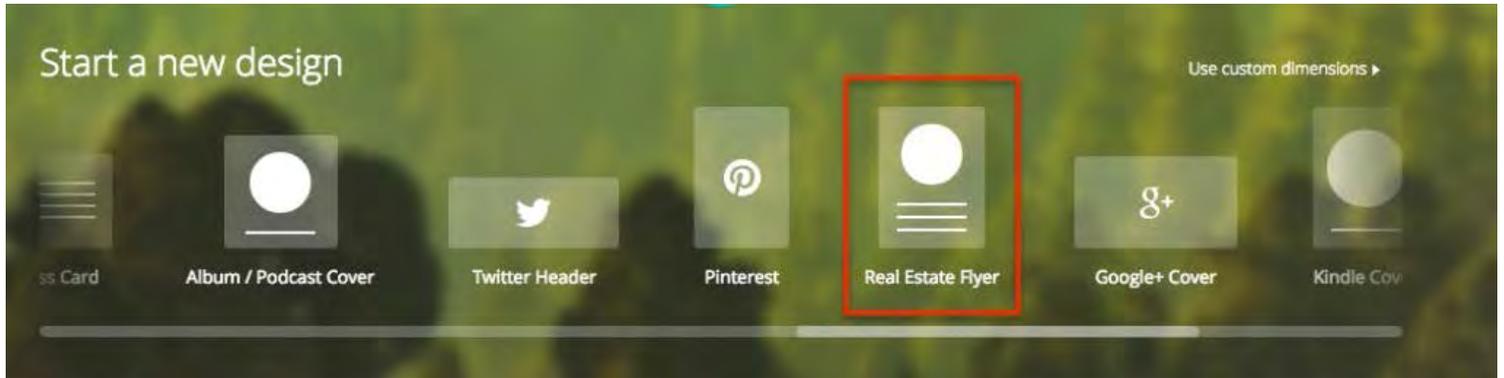
The pitch

When it comes to your social media marketing, never try to make something viral. (Even typing that clichéd bit of jargon makes me wince.)

Instead, create content that is useful to people who need to know something about real estate.

Make it fun, generate curiosity, and try to communicate something you want clients to know about you. Don't just randomly share. Instead, create.

[Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) is a powerful and easy tool that can help you do just that. It uses formatted “canvases” for multiple forms of social and business media, such as Facebook posts, infographics, brochures and email headers.



Canva comes out of the box — or browser, rather — with an immense library of photos, graphics, symbols, layouts and text arrangements for you to use. Most are free, some cost \$1 per use. There is no subscription fee. (Yet.)

You can also use Canva to quickly build real estate fliers. So let's start there.

FOR SALE *Private Home*

The interior of the home is focused around a large hallway serving as the main avenue of traffic and entrance to the adjacent rooms floor.

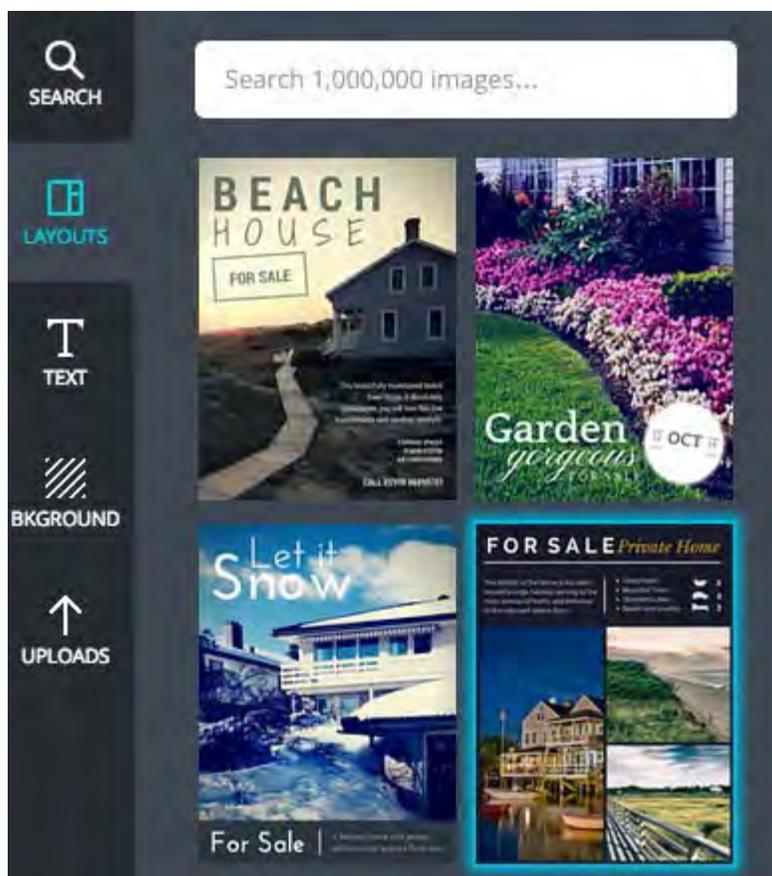
- Great home  2
- Beautiful Town  2
- Wonderful area  3
- Beach and country



The sale

Canva makes registration easy, as well as the process by which you can link a payment method to pay for fee-based content. Even though it's made very clear what's free and what isn't, the dollars can add up fast; be wary. To remedy that, I recommend taking full advantage of Canva's upload and Facebook connect features, which allow you to access images on a local drive or your Facebook account.

Canva's selection of existing real estate flier designs exhibit contemporary design themes; these aren't lame Word templates. When all the cozy breakfast nook and amazing bonus room photos are in place, you can download your work as a high-quality PDF or shareable digital image.



If you use any fee-based artwork, you are shown a billing summary upon download. The admin tools let you easily track your invoices for expensing.

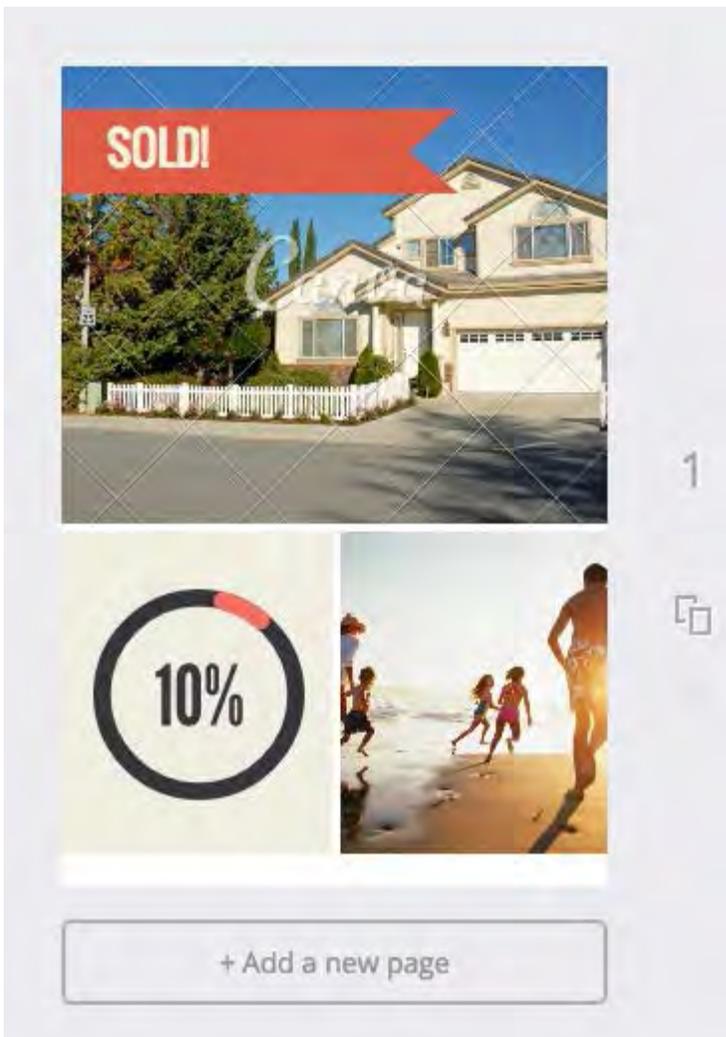
Naturally, what good is online content if you can't share it? Canva makes it very easy to send what you create directly to Facebook or Twitter right after you save it. Everything about Canva is easy.

The software not only helps you build shareable real estate content, but it also inspires you to

create with its layout options. Click to add headers, enrich backgrounds or place body text. Everything is grab, drag and drop, so you can swiftly design graphs for market reports, embed your headshot and hit share.



If you're short on visuals, Canva's embedded an extensive database of images, symbols and graphics categorized by themes such as travel, food, arrows, animals, charts, icons and buttons. It's a great way to make graphics for your own website, too, not just social media.



I've noticed on several occasions that Canva will shudder at times when you're working with picture-heavy presentations. A bug exists that sometimes downloads an inaccurate version of your image; for example, text in blue will download in red. However, I've found that a second download (you have 24 hours of usage for paid imagery) usually fixes the issue.

Canva's newly launched Design School is an excellent resource to help you understand how visual ergonomics drive effective, shareable designs. It uses case studies, blog posts, tutorials and actual examples from the pros to release your inner Warhol.

The close

Anyone who tells you social media and content marketing isn't changing the way real estate is sold is either hopelessly antiquated or simply tech-phobic. The war for keywords is over; the battle for online attention is being waged with shareable content. Granted, there is getting the business, and then there is doing the business. The right content can help you get it. It's up to you to close it.

I find Canva.com to be an exceptionally easy content creation tool and a terrific alternative to

expensive graphic design software.

Have you used this product? What did you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Box.com

TECHNOLOGY

Think inside the Box

Business content management can make your real estate office better



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 4, 2015

Editor's note: This week, Inman is launching a brand-new daily series of articles focused specifically on evaluating the technology you use in your real estate business.

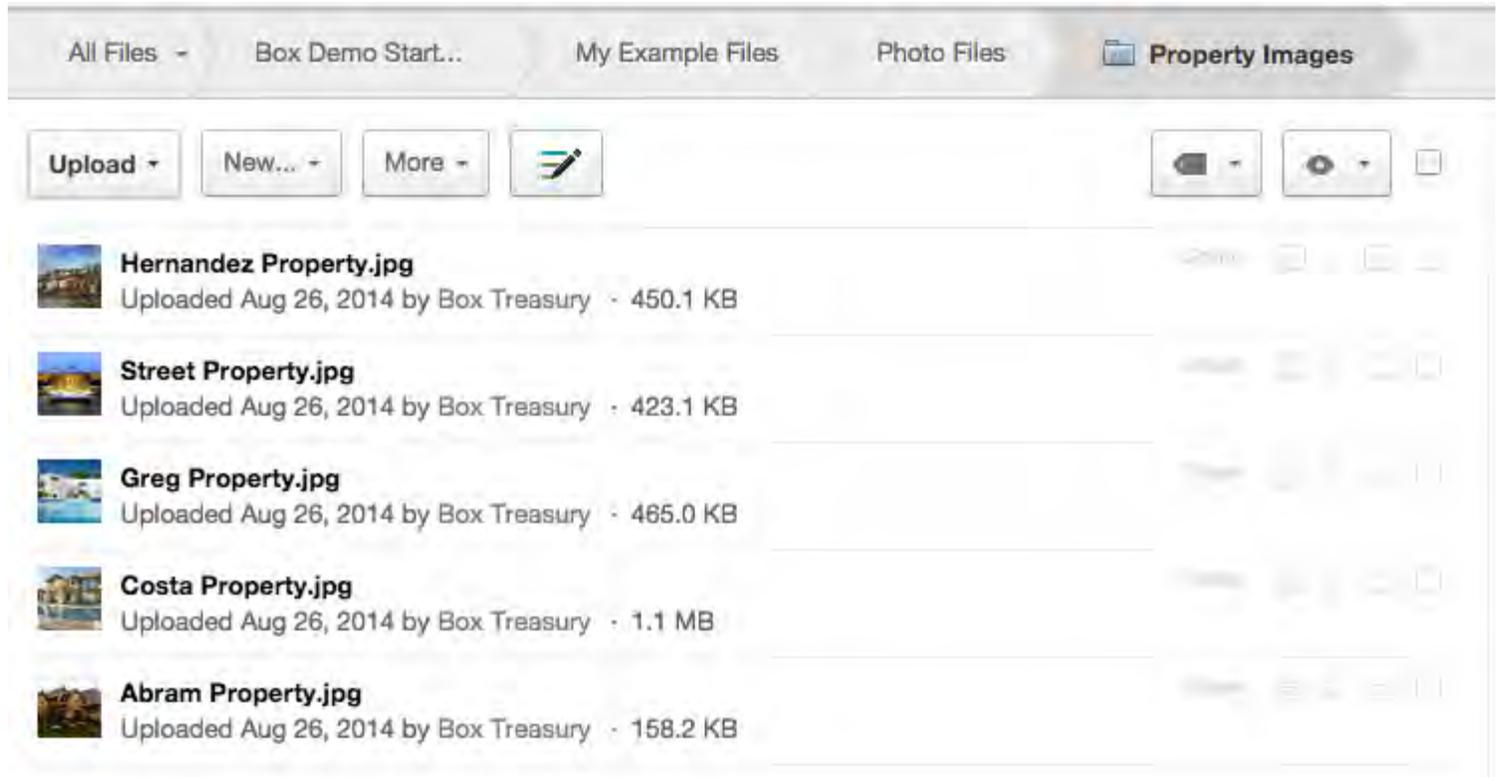
Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

By the end of this quarter, Apple will sell more than 21 million iPads. Tablet PC sales will surpass 57 million units this year. Last year in the United States alone, smartphone sales were valued at more than \$40 billion. Yes, with a “b.”

So it's probably time we admit it: Via laptop or smart watch, hotel Wi-Fi or smartphone, we are perpetually connected and forever Web-enabled. This especially applies to real estate agents.

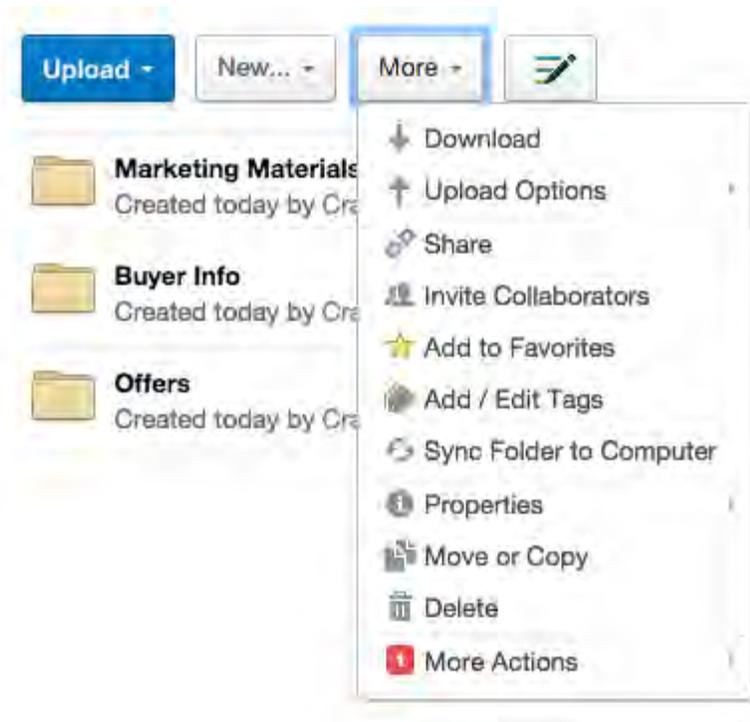
That said, with so many critical communications and vital transaction information being received and replicated throughout this proverbial device stew, how well are we controlling the veracity of our information? Is that offer to purchase and contract that you just looked at the latest version? Did you delete that email?



Document management is a compelling issue for today's real estate agents. If you're not thinking about it, you probably should be. These thoughts led me over to [Box.com](https://www.box.com), a business content management tool that helps users store, collaborate and track access to important forms and information.

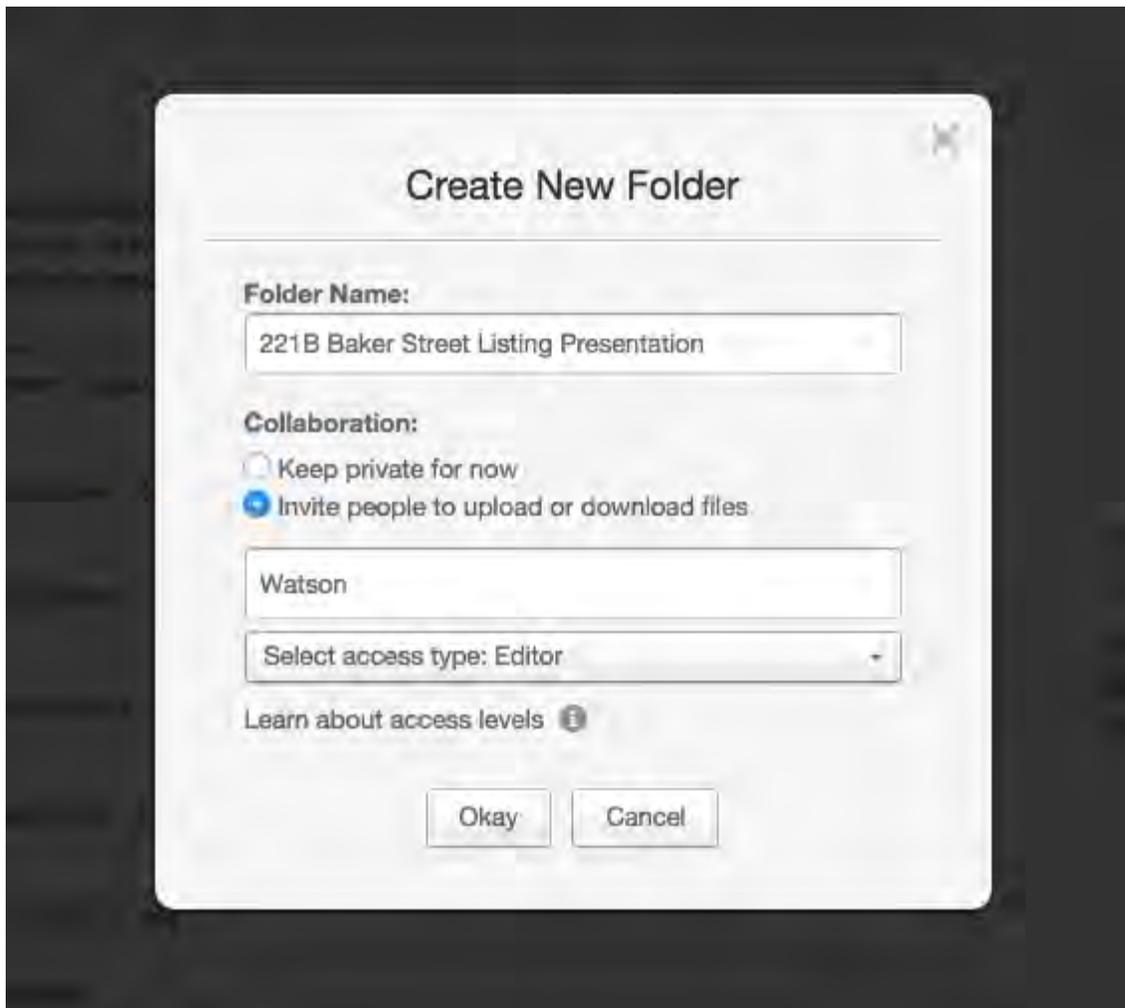
The sale

I'm not a fan of scanning. Never have I been able to understand the inherently redundant process of using a computer to create a document, then using a printer to materialize it, scribbling all over it with ink and then scanning it back into the computer, only to send it to five different people for more printing, inking and scanning.



Yet this baffling form of document editing and data transportation remains far too prevalent in real estate.

Brokerages are stacked with cabinets and folders that hoard multiple versions of transaction documents, their addenda, handwritten notes about important phone calls ... and even (yes) printed emails. All of these can be created and collapsed into a single Box file for each transaction.



Save copies of a buyer’s mortgage approval letters, listing agreements, walk-through videos (viewable directly in Box), inspection reports and financial records in a secure, password-protected Box file.

With document management tools like Box, documents can be collaborated upon within a single interface, from any device. You can quickly invite your team members to offer insight on a listing presentation — or share with clients, via a secure folder, the pro forma on their investment property.

Invite People

Link to Folder

<https://app.box.com/s/3ginxmsn6bl>

Who can access:

People with the link -

- People with the link
- People in this folder
- Remove Link

If someone downloads a document to edit it, it is noted in the folder and file history, as it is when the new version is uploaded — by user, time, and date. Previous versions can also be viewed. No more wondering which one is the most recent.

When all comments are settled, a final, clean version can be produced one time for signatures, either electronic or digital. Box can house DocuSign forms, too, so executing fully electronic transactions is a snap.

Upload - New... - More -

08 Shanahan Property 202 Chapala St.jpg

Uploaded Aug 26, 2014 by Box Treasury · 451.5 KB

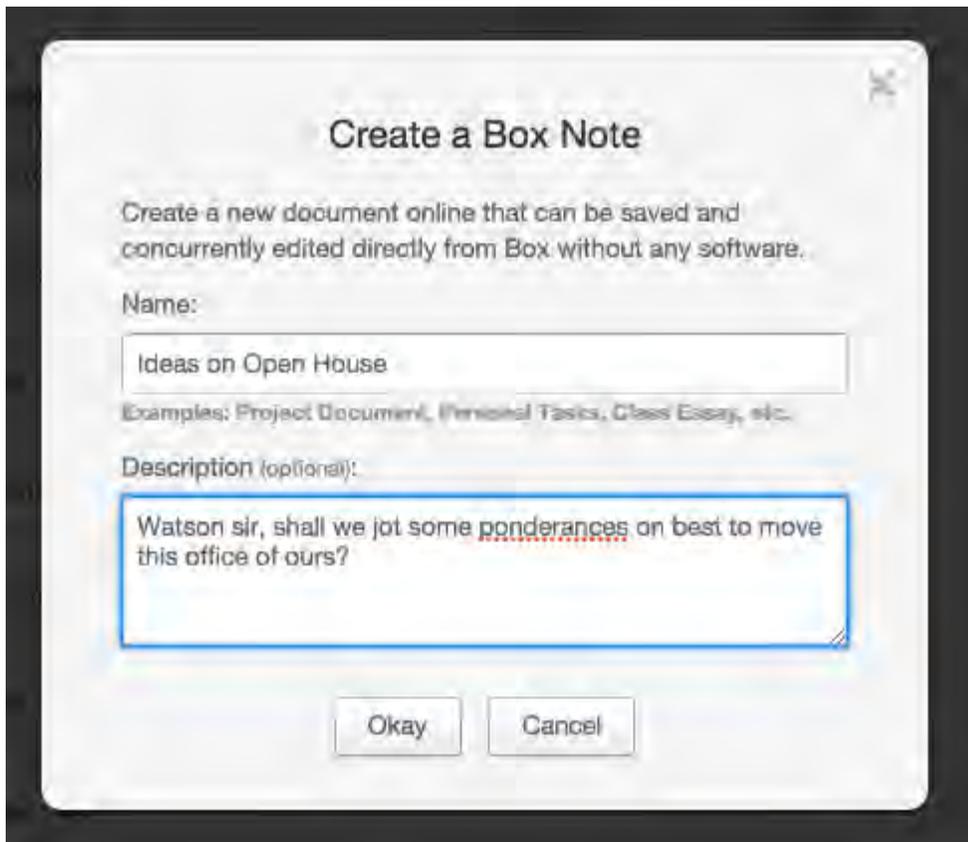
[Comment · Assign Task](#)

Enter your comment

Tip: type @ to mention a collaborator, or assign this as a task

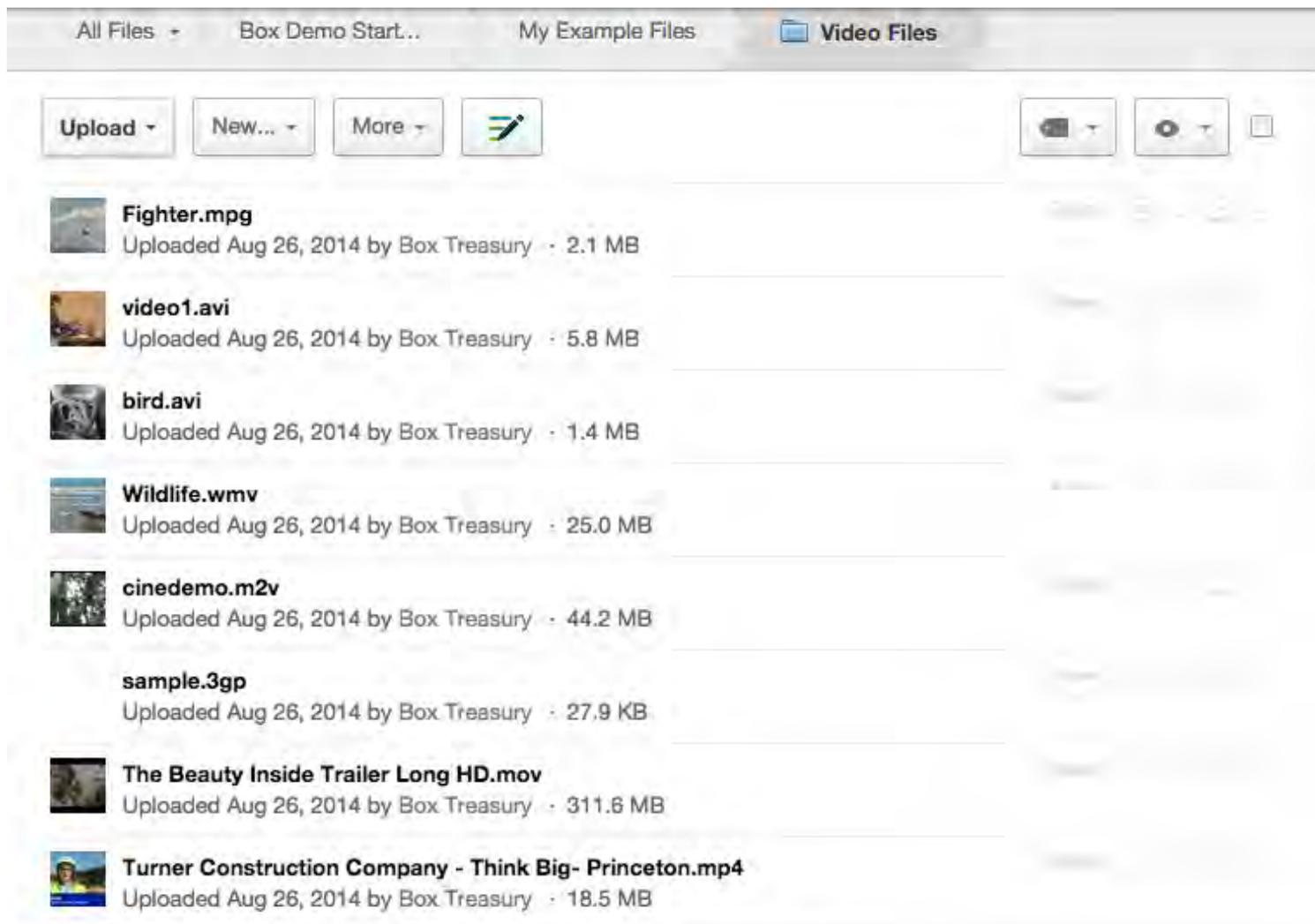
Add Comment

Instead of sending an email about a transaction, create a Box Note within that deal's file. Parties to the transaction will be notified of its creation and can respond directly within Box. Thus, all pertinent input is automatically embedded into its native context.



Because of access rules you can place on each file, even down to the amount of time a file can be viewed, it's simple to track who has viewed what and when — no more email chains asking, "Have you seen the counteroffer yet?" Naturally, these features enable you to adhere to standard transaction privacy measures, as well.

Box looks great on desktop browsers, but it's also very friendly to mobile devices, as any software in the ECM (Enterprise Content Management) space should be. And since it's fundamentally smarter business to maintain a single, secure source for all transaction data, that bias makes Box a great fit for multidevice users.



We tend to forget that with every device version of our inbox we view, we increase the risk of jeopardizing business intelligence. Like a database, the more times a human is meddling with it, the greater the risk of ineffectiveness. (Now can you see how the office “IT guy” earned his surly, outlier reputation?)

Ultimately, given today’s heavily digitized transaction cycle, every byte of information about a deal, from texts to voice mails, is pertinent data — especially if legal issues ever come into play. It’s more critical than ever that we condense and compartmentalize transaction information.

The close

Box is quite affordable, only \$15 per user, per month. Personal accounts are free if you want to trial it that way. The starter level — which is pretty robust — gets you out the door for \$5 per user, per month.

I know that you’re probably familiar with the concept of online document management.

However, if you're not familiar with Box, then you're not aware of how far the concept has come.

Have you used this product? What did you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Doorsteps

TECHNOLOGY

Doorsteps helps agents walk homebuyers through the process

Develop prospects into buyers for \$25 per month



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 5, 2015

Editor's note: This week, Inman is launching a brand-new daily series of articles focused specifically on evaluating the technology you use in your real estate business.

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

Online tools like [Doorsteps.com](#) is why real estate agents need to start thinking differently about how they reach clients with technology.

No longer is knowing average sale prices and assembling a nice listing presentation enough to

become a market leader. Like books, music and airline tickets, real estate sales is not immune to the depth and connective power of the Internet.

Retail chains spend millions of dollars understanding what influences the people who walk in their stores. Apple stores don't function and look like they do because it looks cool and contemporary. The music volume, the colors, the products all within reach on wide, unobtrusive tables? All deliberate. All intended to engage Apple's audience.

1 VISUALIZE HOME OWNERSHIP 2 ASSESS YOUR BUYING POWER 3 HOUSE HUNT IN EARNEST 4 MAKE AN OFFER & NEGOTIATE 5 PREPARE FOR CLOSING 6 CLOSE & MOVE IN

< We guide you in understanding what kind of life you are hoping to build, and how buying a home might fit into that plan. >

Hopes For Tomorrow >

Get Your Credit Score >

SIGN UP TO LEARN MORE

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Your Role (choose one) ▼

SIGN UP

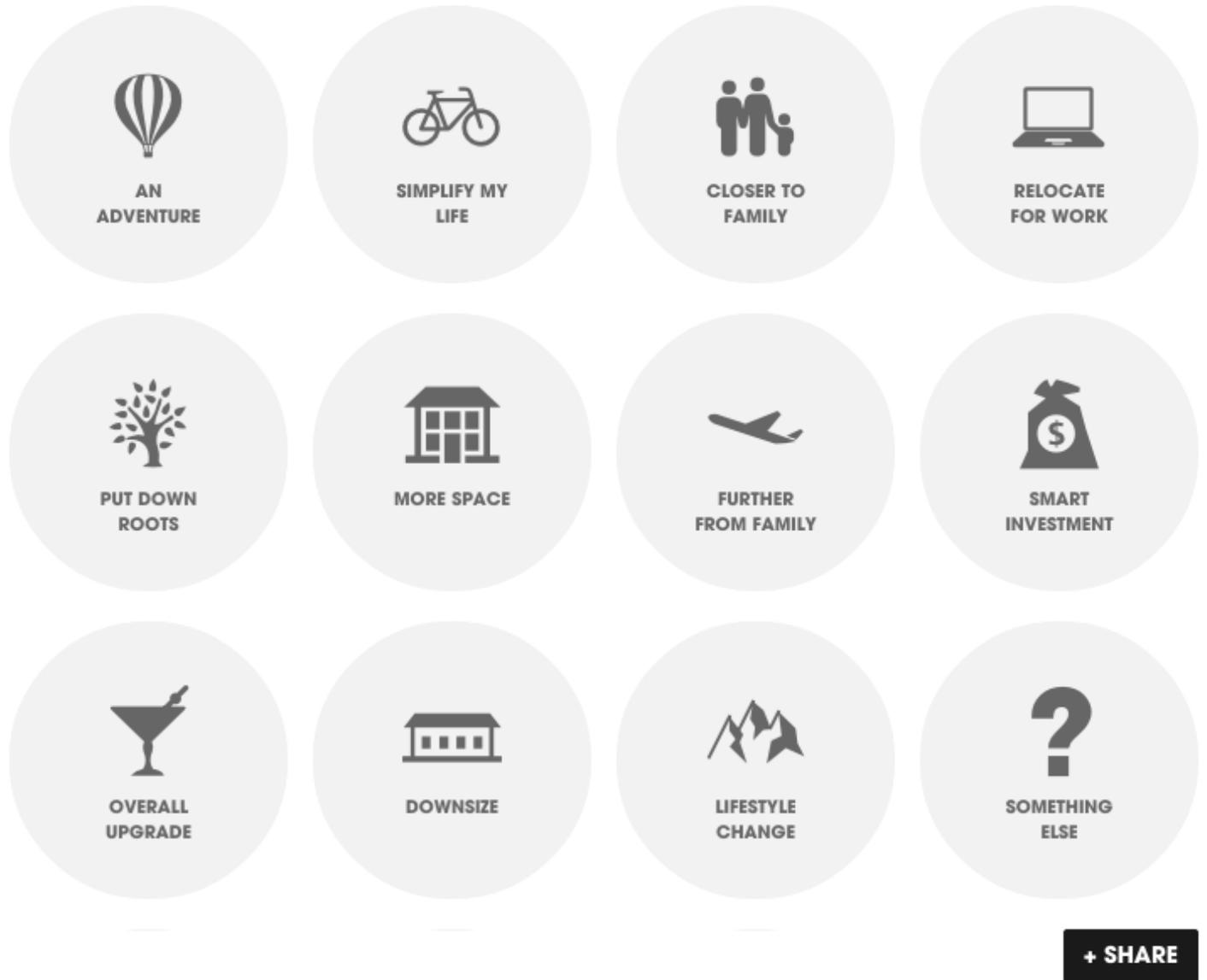
Also in this phase:

- Your Life Today
- Your Finances Today
- Where You Imagine Moving
- Neighborhood Qualities You Love
- Start Collecting Listings
- Your Timing
- What You Can Afford
- Get Your Credit Score

Real estate agents need to be in sync with how today's consumers engage real estate information. This means knowing what apps and resources homebuyers and sellers are using. And it means doing more than just making sure your listings are circulated via the IDX (Internet data exchange).

The sale

Doorsteps is more than an educational process for prospective homebuyers; it's also a tool for Web-savvy agents to reach them as a trusted adviser. You build a branded landing page and invite offline prospects into the step-by-step homeowner education program via email or URL share.



Individual agents can sign up for \$25 per month. Or, the more altruistic agent teams of 10 or more can snag an enterprise license for an unpublished (negotiable?) amount.

Through a dashboard, you have access to your buyer's latest actions on the site, questions and program progress.

Given the Doorsteps approach, you'll probably be working with cautious buyers who are toe-stepping into the dark void of ownership. They'll be glancing around, nervous about down payments and credit reports snarling in the shadows.

6 TIPS FOR TOURING

#1

Don't gush.



When touring a home, keep your thoughts to yourself, especially if you love the place. This helps maintain a better negotiating position.

#2

Bring a camera.



You think you will remember everything, but you won't. Assuming you have permission from the seller, take lots of photos of each property, inside and out.

#3

Bring decision makers.



If your partner or spouse needs to also give the okay, wait until they are available to tour with you. It will save a lot of time not to revisit several homes over and over.

#4

Bring a tape measure.



Some spaces may be too small to accommodate your existing furniture. Take key measurements of cramped quarters, but remember — buy new furniture to fit your new house (not a new house to fit old furniture).

#5

Ignore decor.



As hard as it may be, you need to see past furniture, wallpaper, wall color, and carpets. All those things will or could easily change once you move in.

#6

Download our worksheet.



We've created a Tour A Home Like A Pro sheet. Print out one copy of the full version (which has all the detailed questions, room by room), and several copies of the summary sheets (so you can have a quick overview, too, for each property).

However, that's a market reality that I think a lot of agents don't want to accept. Services like Doorsteps are why online connections are altering the landscape of real estate services. A mentorship role fosters a great deal more trust than an 11-by-17-inch, recycling bin-ready postcard of recent sales mailed to an unearned audience.

Doorsteps's approach is to engage a prospective buyer and turn that buyer into a homeowner through ongoing advice, market research, mortgage insight and, smartly, the integration of how lifestyle factors into the homebuying decision.

As we all know, buying a house can sometimes be too numeric and clinical. Interest rates. Private mortgage insurance. Closing costs. Homeowners association fees. Odd, considering how emotionally driven the decision typically is for families.

Like the famous [TED talk by Simon Sinek](#), Doorsteps starts with "Why?" Why do you want to

own a house? What's driving the decision? It's amazing how often this isn't the lynchpin of a sale, because it should be.

From its "Mortgages 101" content to insight on "Preparing to Move," Doorsteps is, in essence, a fully accredited, acorn-to-oak-tree online course in buying a home.

Mortgages 101

Buying a home will likely be the biggest purchase you'll ever make and the biggest debt load you'll ever carry. Unfortunately, almost 75% of buyers admit they never truly understood all the ins and outs of their mortgage before signing on the dotted line. We won't let that happen to you. We've spent months reading all the fine print and breaking it down into easy-to-understand pieces.

DEFINITION

What's a Mortgage?



EXAMPLE

Fixed-Rate
Adjustable
Hybrid
etc

Most people think of a mortgage as the money you borrow to buy a home, and pay back over time, with interest. But that's actually not quite right. Technically speaking, a mortgage isn't a loan. It's a document that you actually give a bank that says they have the right to use your home as collateral in the event you don't repay the loan. Once you've repaid the loan in full, the mortgage disappears — meaning your bank no longer has any claim to your home.

Sure, "How to Buy a Home" courses are held in countless conference rooms any given weekend across the U.S. But you know what they really are: prospecting efforts. The intent isn't to nurture, it's to sell. It's the why that matters. And speaking of "why," now you know why those courses don't work as well as you hoped. Consumers may need access to your market insight, but they also know when they're being sold to.

It's that very concept that the Internet can overcome. It can educate without bias, without selling. And that's the lesson; that's how today's heavily lifestyle-driven homebuyer wants to be treated.

When your buyer advances through the "steps" to viewing homes (via a connection with realtor.com), they can do so within Doorsteps's interface, with you commenting in real time. This arm's-length virtual conversation can go a long way toward eliminating the "buy-now" pressure that far too many people experience. That's a nice touch. Or nontouch, rather.

Doorsteps makes clear to buyer-users that it is not an agent-matching tool. You can sign up to advise, but there is no guarantee a user you work with will hire you.

Moving you from a curious homebuyer to a confident one.

And when the time is right, from a confident buyer into a committed one. Buying a home can be a complicated endeavor, so we've broken down the process into **six distinct phases** to help save you time, money, and stress.

- 1 Visualize Home Ownership
- 2 Assess Your Buying Power
- 3 House Hunt in Earnest
- 4 Make an Offer & Negotiate
- 5 Prepare for Closing
- 6 Close & Move In

GET STARTED

However, you can invite prospects generated offline into your Doorsteps account, a move I think would go a long way toward imprinting on them your motives. (Hey, there's a good use of that Saturday afternoon class.)

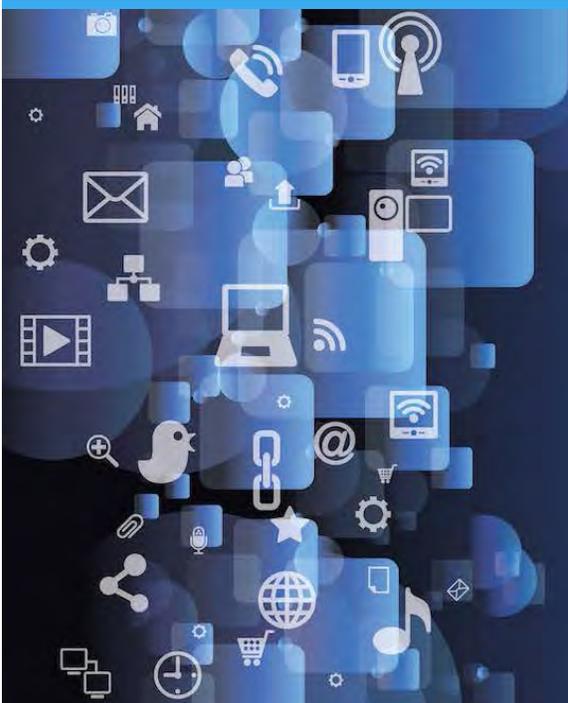
The close

Doorsteps.com is innovative, well-organized and worth the \$25 per month it costs to help develop prospects into buyers. More than that, though, it's a next-generation approach to helping buyers understand real estate.

Not every buyer prospect you speak to will be a good candidate for Doorsteps, though. It's a first-time-buyer tool, so select your invites carefully.

Tomorrow's column will be about Doorstep's app, Swipe.

These are the tools that will drive the way your customers find you — and use your services.



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Swipe

TECHNOLOGY

Swipe embraces visual media trends to create a new breed of home search

Try this upstart tool and watch your listings go viral



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 6, 2015

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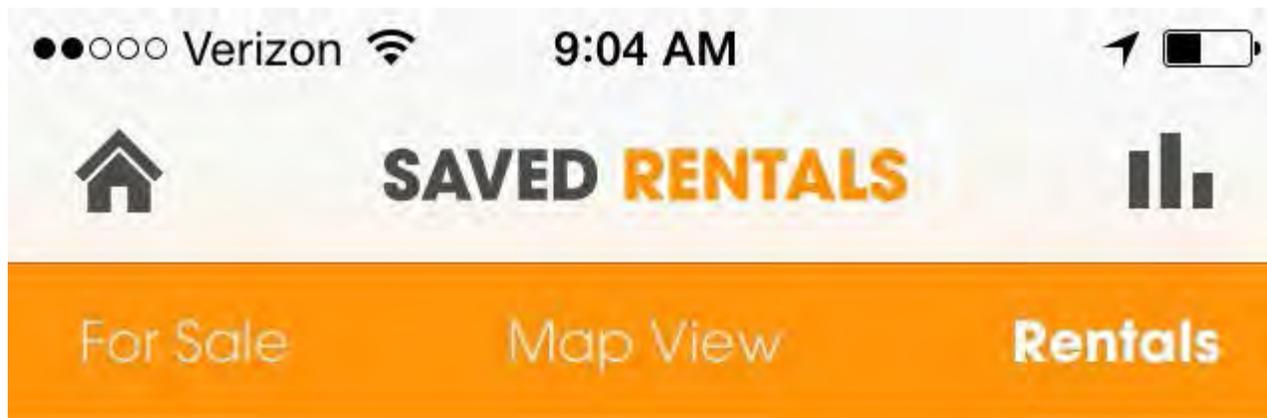
The pitch

Yesterday, I discussed in some verbosity [Doorsteps](#), a Web-based homebuyer education

platform that allows agents to virtually assist new buyers. Well, the company has an app, too, called Swipe.

If you haven't noticed, we're becoming a heavily reactionary culture. We read less, love pictures (see Pinterest's \$3.8 billion market valuation) and spout opinions about a complicated issue in moments (Keystone pipeline: yes or no?)

Doorsteps Swipe deftly mixes those undeniable truisms with realtor.com's listing feed and serves it up on the iPhone to intelligently engage the way prospective buyers browse rental and for-sale listings.





11705 Gloria Azules A...

\$1,550/month

4 beds / 3 baths / 2532 sqft



11909 Arenoso Dr

\$1,800/month

4 beds / 3 baths / 1882 sqft



11620 Villa Malaparte...

\$1,800/month

The sale

If you need any more convincing about the value of a listing's curb appeal, Swipe is it. It's a mug shot for your client's home. The viewer is either going to pass judgment right away by swiping left (Is that a face tattoo?) or swiping right (He/she looks well-adjusted).

But Swipe measures much more than a gut reaction. After a number of "thumbs up" selections, you can view a simple but in-depth report of what it is you like. Presented in an easy "sale summary" is the average price of homes selected, number of bathrooms and bedrooms, year built, square footage and price-per, and even an area schools rating.



SALE SUMMARY

We've compiled stats on your saved homes so you'll have a

better sense of what you like.

Price

AVERAGE

\$378,693

LOWEST

\$297,000

HIGHEST

\$635,000

Bedrooms

Bathrooms

currently viewing **Sale Summary**

Swipe was built to mirror the Doorsteps process in that it's a way for renters who are (or will be) prospective homebuyers to engage with real estate information in a friendly, information-light format.

Greg Fischer of realtor.com (Doorsteps’s parent), who also handles content acquisition and partnerships with Doorsteps, says that the small development team examined popular visual media apps to understand how people interact with formation — even Tinder. They eschewed traditional real estate search apps as they went.

“We reverse-engineered the data flow,” Fischer says. “One thing that intimidates renters from becoming buyers is having to know what information to search with in a website or mobile app, like needing to know the beds and bath or price range or ZIP code. So we just wanted users to make a judgment call on what they’re interested in. The summary feature is Swipe telling them, ‘Hey, this is what you’re interested in.’”



LAS VEGAS, NV

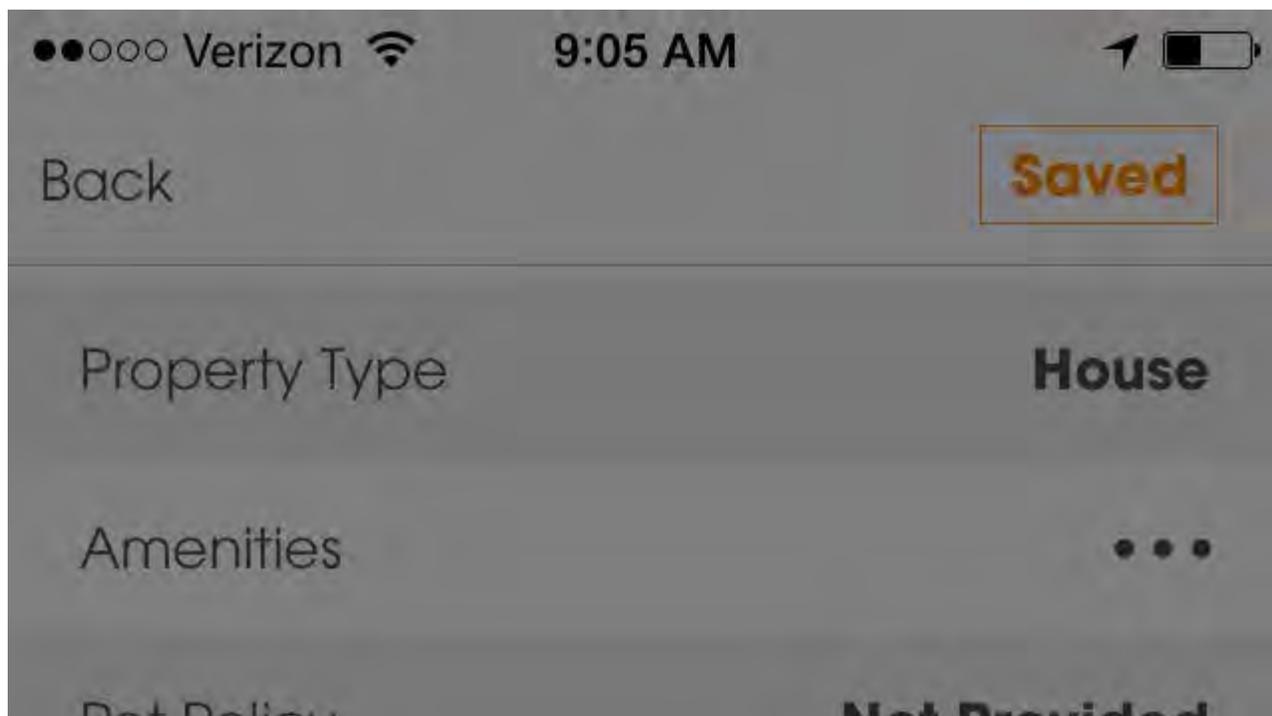
1 / 35 

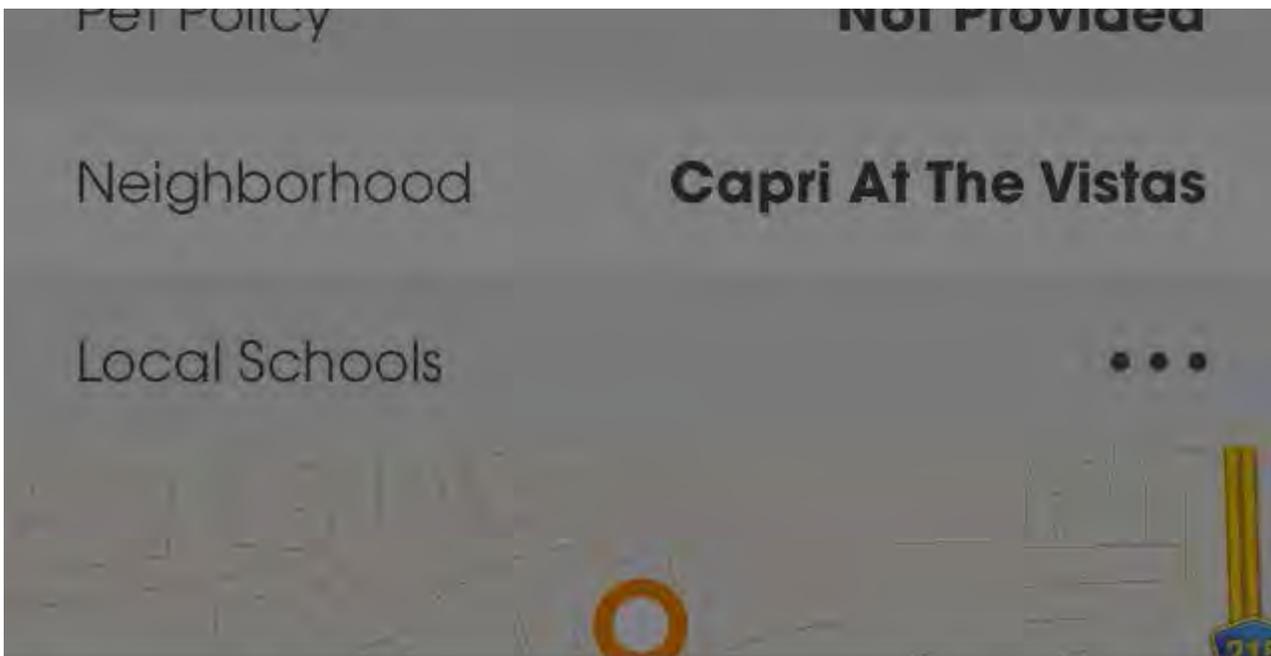
640 Chervil Valley Dr



After enough snap judgements, a telling pattern of preference emerges.

Doorsteps Swipe creates the same experience for renters, its primary audience. They can scroll through options, view additional pictures, maps, school data, pet policies and also contact the property manager. Like the “for sale” option, a property can be immediately shared through email, a text message or Facebook.





Message



Email



Facebook



Cancel

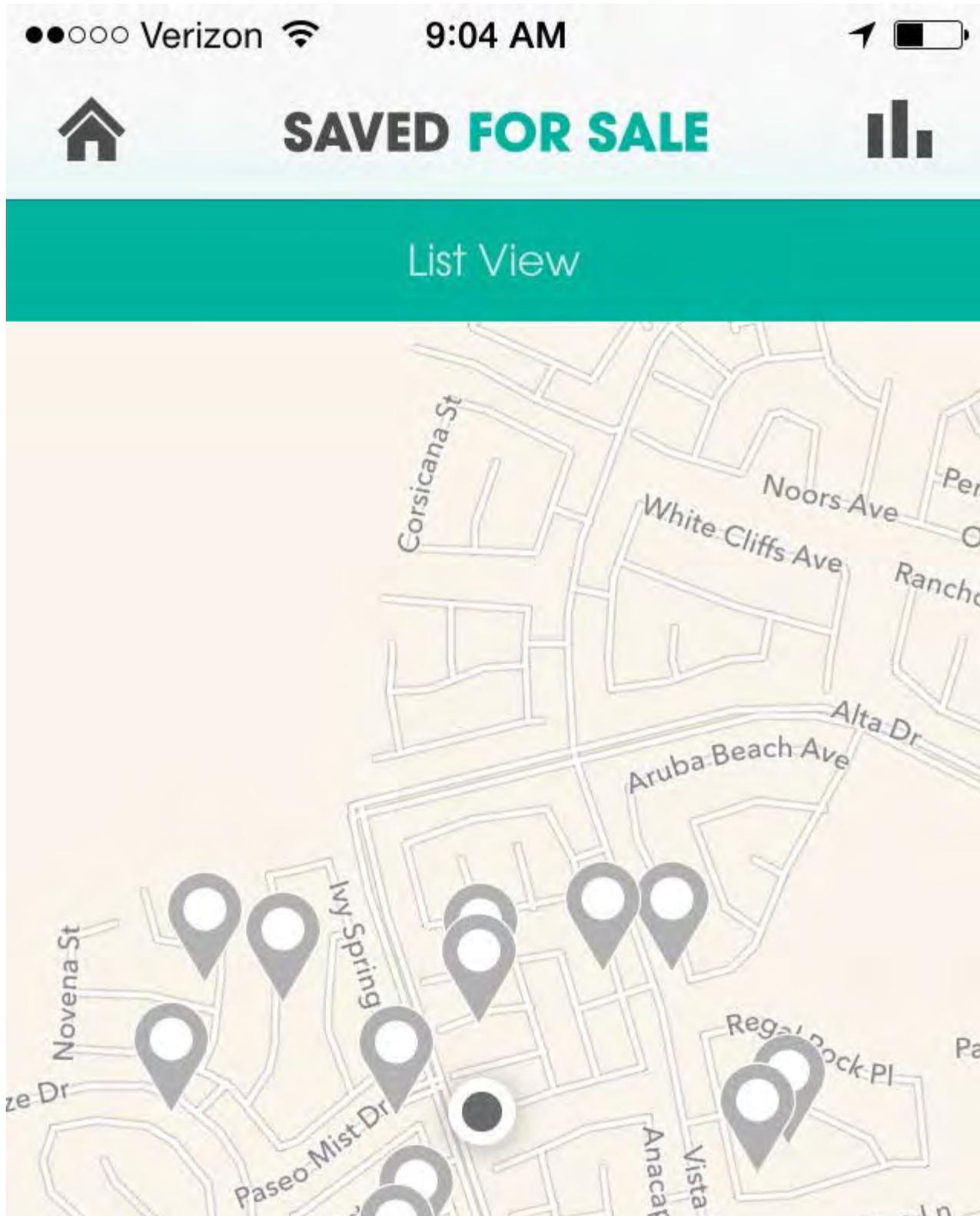
In the time it takes a person to swipe a thumb across an iPhone screen, your listing could be in the inboxes and news feeds of the user's social circle, where it faces an unpredictable jury of subjectivity and even more gut-reaction scrutiny.

Fischer made it clear to me that like its parent application, Swipe is an educational tool helping aspiring homebuyers understand not just how to buy, but how to use real estate information. And on that front, it absolutely succeeds. Swipe is not a tool for the second or more

sophisticated homebuyer; it's an introductory process. However, I can see its appeal to all demographics within the market. After all, aren't your parents using online dating sites?

The close

I summarize my two-column infatuation with Doorsteps and Swipe thusly: It's no longer about the information, it's about how information is presented to help the consumer.





For far too long, the MLS was a proud, fee-based advantage for real estate agents. It was your broadsword, aggressively unsheathed and wielded forcefully against for-sale-by-owners and fledgling Web-based home search services. Today, the battlefield is a clanging, confusing melee of broadswords. Real estate data is grossly ubiquitous, and it's making cautious shoppers retreat from the market.

So now that everyone has the same weapon, it comes down to who can operate that weapon with the most skill. Doorsteps and Swipe are marching to the front lines.

Have you used this product? What did you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

Propertybase

TECHNOLOGY

Propertybase is much more than a CRM

To saddle this stallion of productivity, you're going to need someone to focus on lassoing it



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 9, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

Customer relationship management, or CRM, has become a somewhat ubiquitous term slapped on any enterprise software system that more or less enhances the way we manage contacts. Thus, a well-designed Excel sheet could be a CRM.

That said, it isn't right to call Propertybase a CRM. It's so much more. If you use it only to remember when a client has a birthday, well, then, you're doing it wrong.

However, when it comes to whole-office platforms, I wonder: Is there such a thing as too robust?

The sale

The Salesforce-powered **Propertybase** is too meaty and calorie-rich for a small, independent real estate office. This is John Candy's "Old 96er" from "The Great Outdoors." Its carb count is probably due to its applicability to both developers and commercial agents. This means it has the intrinsic power to manage multiple teams of tin knockers and tenant reps in overpriced suits.

The screenshot displays the Propertybase software interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for Home, My Tasks, Companies, Contacts, Conversations, Requests, Offers, Closings, Listing Browser, Listings (highlighted), Documents, Dashboards, and Reports. Below the navigation bar, there is a sidebar on the left with a 'Create New...' button and a 'Recent Items' list containing several listings, including 'Lovely Classic 6 on the UES'. The main content area shows the details for the listing 'Lovely Classic 6 on the UES'. The listing title is 'Lovely Classic 6 on the UES' and the owner is 'Max-Michael Mayer'. The listing status is currently 'Active', and a dropdown menu is open showing options: --None--, In Acquisition, In Preparation, Active (selected), Blocked, Reserved, Sold, and Archived. The listing details include: Listing Type, Price (USD 3,850,000.00), Year Built (1948), View (City), Property Owner (Charlene Hazell), Bedrooms (4.0), Bathrooms (1.5), Size (1,900.00), and Parking Spaces (2). The description is 'A traditional classic six on East 69th street.'

I find this system best for larger, multi-office residential operations. But that doesn't mean it's expensive. At \$69 per user-month for the "company edition," it's not that spendy. There is a four-user minimum, however, so you're out the door at a minimum of \$276 per month.

The "enterprise version" of Propertybase for Residential, which adds MLS (multiple listing service) connectivity, financial reporting and franchise management tools, asks you for \$89 per user-month with a 10-account minimum. That's a bit steeper. But again, it's for teams and multiple offices, so costs can be spread.

The feature set in Propertybase is hearty, with task assignments, showings management, listing inventory integration, buyer profiles, embedded HTML email tools, intricate search functionality and granular reporting.

propertybase REAL ESTATE CRM

Search All... Search

Brian Hoyt Help & Training Propertybase Agent

Home Chatter Companies Contacts Documents Reports +

Create New...

Recent Items

- RC-000028
- F-000037
- Mark Allen
- R-000033
- Brian Hoyt
- 563 Madison Avenue
- Manicruz Weaver
- 563 Madison Avenue
- Randall Lamb
- Robert Bailey

Quick Links

- My Tasks
- My Calendar
- Propertybase Knowledgebase

Recycle Bin

Brian Hoyt Talked to a potential customer today who is looking for a 2BR on the Upper East, anyone have any suggestions? 1 hour ago Clear

Friday December 16, 2011

Show Chatter

Create New Lead or Contact OK

Create New Property Request OK

Track Activity OK

Plan Showings OK

Plan Appointments and other Events OK

Print or Send Listing Information OK

Add New Listing OK

Dashboard Customize Page

My Tasks New Overdue

Complete	Date	Subject	Name	Related To
X		Contact owner's rep		1 E 161st St

Calendar New Event Calendar Help

Saturday 12/17/2011

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Meet with potential investor : 563 Madison Avenue

Monday 12/19/2011

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Meeting

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

I'm very much a fan of how simple Propertybase programmers have made it to silo an entire transaction, from the buyer's initial click of interest via its lead capture feature from your website, all the way down to uploading files sent from the closing team.

Users can search for a buyer's preferences among your company's inventory and quickly return a visually appealing, comprehensive report from directly within the dashboard. With the nationwide MLS connectivity, your search reach becomes vast. It has tools for brokers and office managers, too, like commission tracking, desk-fee parsing and forecasting capability.

Thus, an entire transaction can be managed via Propertybase, not just the name and number of the woman you spoke to at Panera Bread.

The screenshot displays the Propertybase REAL ESTATE CRM interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs including Home, My Tasks, Companies, Contacts, Conversations, Requests, Offers, Closings, Listing Browser, Listings, Documents, Dashboards, and Reports. The main content area shows a closing detail for offer C-000002. An 'Offer' modal window is open, displaying the following information:

Offer ID	O-000027
Listing	
Status	Accepted
Potential Buyer/Tenant	Jennifer Buyer
Offered Amount	USD 1,675,000.00
Price	USD 1,795,000.00

The background interface includes a sidebar with 'Recent Items' listing various offers and listings, and a main area with 'Closing Detail' and 'Closing Details' sections. The 'Closing Details' section shows a table of tasks such as Inspections, Title Report, Appraisal, Bank Approval/Condition Sheet, and Escrow Closing Instructions, with their respective completion statuses.

And therein lies my concern.

Propertybase for Residential is what I call “full-time” software. To saddle this stallion of productivity, you’re going to need someone to focus on lassoing it, as well as staying on top of agents with access. It needs to be open in your browser throughout the workday.

This doesn’t mean it’s hard to use: Everything is right up front, visually ergonomic and very much relational, meaning a note you add about a listing client’s phone call will appear in each instance of that contact’s record. You can jump around cleanly amongst the records and transaction milestones and quickly find what it is you need. So again, capability isn’t the issue here; commitment to it is.

Dashboard

Refresh

Last refreshed at 12/20/2011 5:28 AM. Displaying data as Max-Michael Mayer.

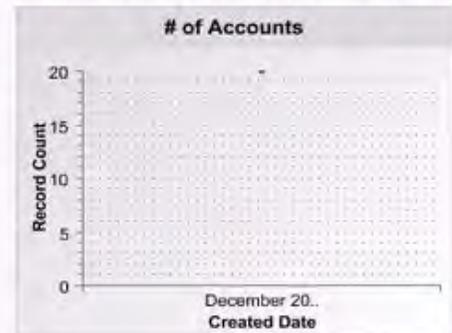
Users Logged In



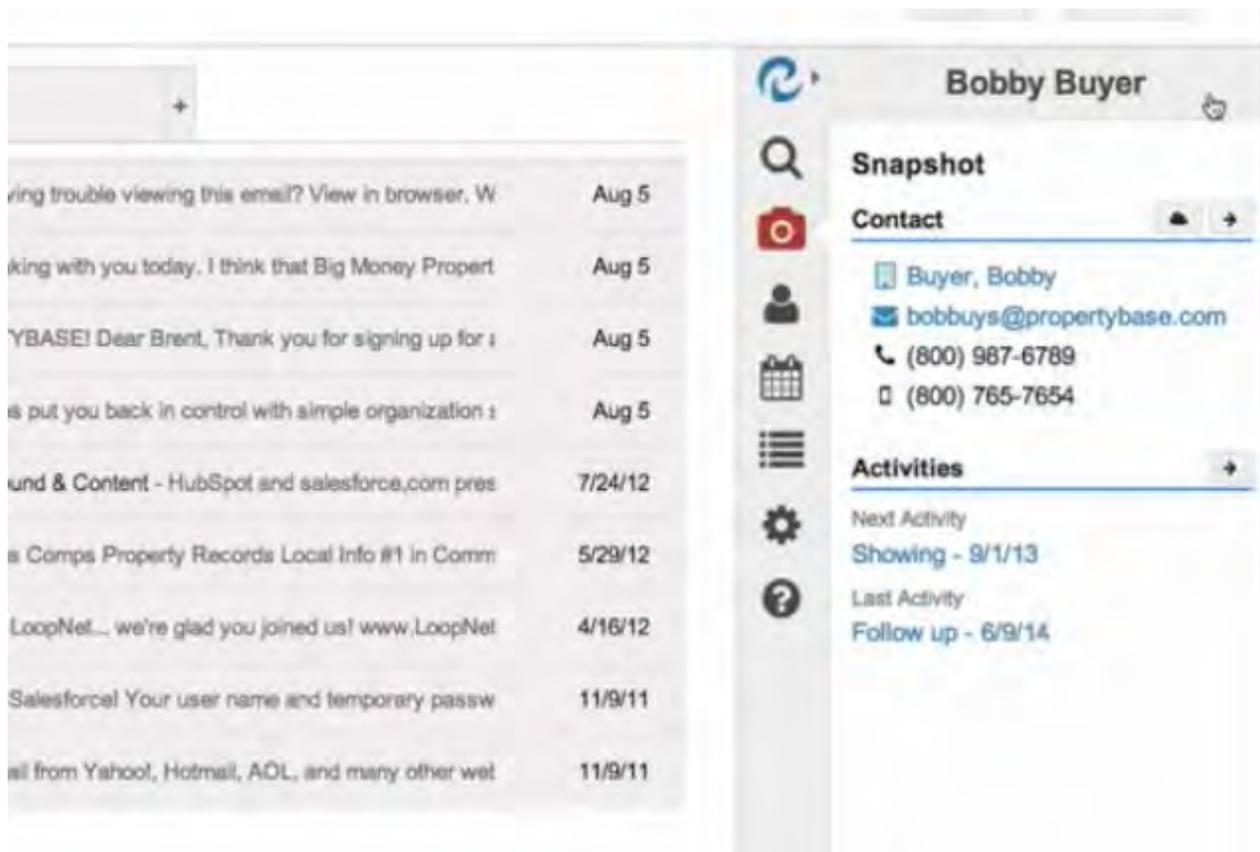
Completed Activities

Last 30 Days	
Assigned	Record Count
Max-Michael Mayer	2

Information Added to Salesforce



Lastly, if you're going in on Propertybase, go all in on its partnership with Cirrus Insight. This Gmail bolt-on is light and skillful, embedding itself on the sidebar of your inbox to stream contact, task, activities and transaction data as you work in your browser. Having all that data right next to your Gmail account creates a sense of action around your workflow; it's ever-present and unobtrusive. This is a sharp feature that even has system admin functionality.



Screenshot of Propertybase integrated into Gmail using Cirrus Insight.

There are an array of additional tools you can add on to Propertybase. You can connect to [Box.com](#), Dropbox and DocuSign. You can also make Skype calls and link records to QuickBooks.

The close

Propertybase for Residential is much more real estate office management system than it is a CRM. Robust and deeply programmed, all levels of user will need complete buy-in for your operation to get the most out of it. If that's the case, you'll get all of that "most," and probably more.

Have you used this product? What did you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE
TECH REVIEW:
PORTABLE CHARGING DEVICES

TECHNOLOGY

Stay connected with portable power

What good is a mobile CRM when your device dies?



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 10, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

My wife's parents wonder why we don't have a landline.

They express this opinion quite often (simultaneously, of course) while on separate extensions of their landline. With exceptional patience and hard-earned tact, my wife attempts to explain that we travel a great deal, use our phones for more than just talking, and that while certainly of better sound quality, a landline is essentially a waste of money.

Almost as if the question wasn't due a response, they argue with one another about something for a moment and the topic quickly shifts to canned pickles.

Since we all travel so much, run mobile CRMs, capture video, control drones and text until our emoticons unionize and announce a strike, I thought it would be worthwhile to discuss how we keep our smartphones charged.

The sale

I argue that no industry, collectively, uses more smartphone data than residential real estate. Commercial agents are no strangers to mobile tech, but they're just talking about golf handicaps and changing tailors. Car chargers are one thing, but what about all day at a slow open house? Or at Starbucks when all the plugs are taken and there's still foam in your cup?

You need to stay powered to compete, and caffeine doesn't always do it. Maybe these gadgets will help.



Power Practical Lithium 4400: I have to have a phone when guiding guests in remote places. I may not always have a signal, but the second I do, an emergency call needs to go out. I own this device, and it goes everywhere with me. It can hold power to charge two iPhones to capacity via USB and even an LED lantern that will run for hours. It's also small enough to keep in your pocket while connected for charging.



[Black Diamond Ember Power Light Flashlight](#): Maybe you were an industrial designer before you became a licensed agent? If so, this is your device charger. Sleek, ultraportable and also a flashlight, the Ember Power rotates its aluminum cylinder to reveal a touch-sensitive on/off switch for the light, then again to reveal the USB port. At the very least, you'll have something to talk about at the next staff sales meeting.



Brunton Pulse 1500: Purely a portable power company, Brunton is who you call when the power goes out. (Or when the zombies come.) The Pulse 1500 is a palm-sized workhorse that will zap your phone back to life or keep it on this side of the ground when you're just not ready to let the business day die. It's a single-charge device, but for under \$30, you can't go wrong.



Goal Zero Switch 8 Recharger: Goal Zero creates an array of effective, affordable solar energy solutions that preppers just love. The Switch 8 is another front-pocket carry not much bigger than a Sharpie. It has a male USB port to charge it and a female port to deliver the goods. The LED charge meter is useful, too. If you happen to own a Goal Zero solar panel (and why don't you?!), you can use it to charge the Switch 8, as well.

The close

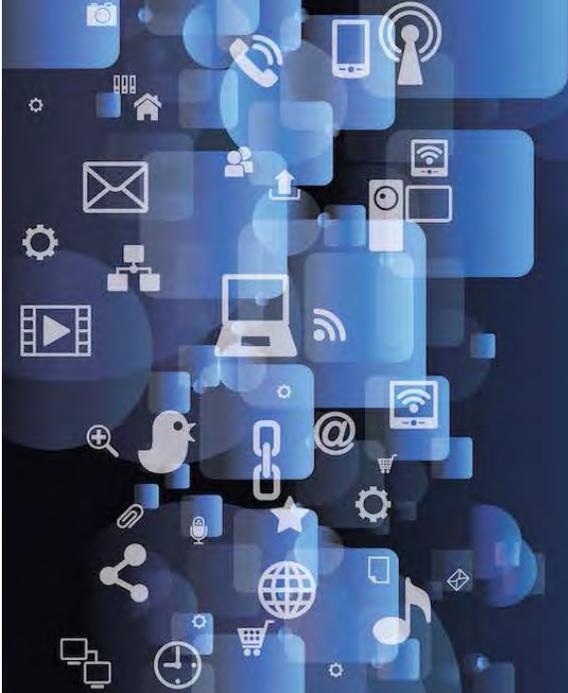
There are a lot of portable chargers out there, so the decision can be cumbersome — especially if you're like me: a person who spends way too much time researching purchases.

These specific options are targeted to the outdoor recreation world, which means they're harder than what you'll find on the shelves at big-box stores, even though these are brands with which you may not be that familiar.

Who wants a pickle?

What's your favorite portable charging device? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

TINYLETTER

TECHNOLOGY

TinyLetter makes email marketing about the email

Your previous clients, prospects, friends and colleagues should all be on your email list



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 11, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

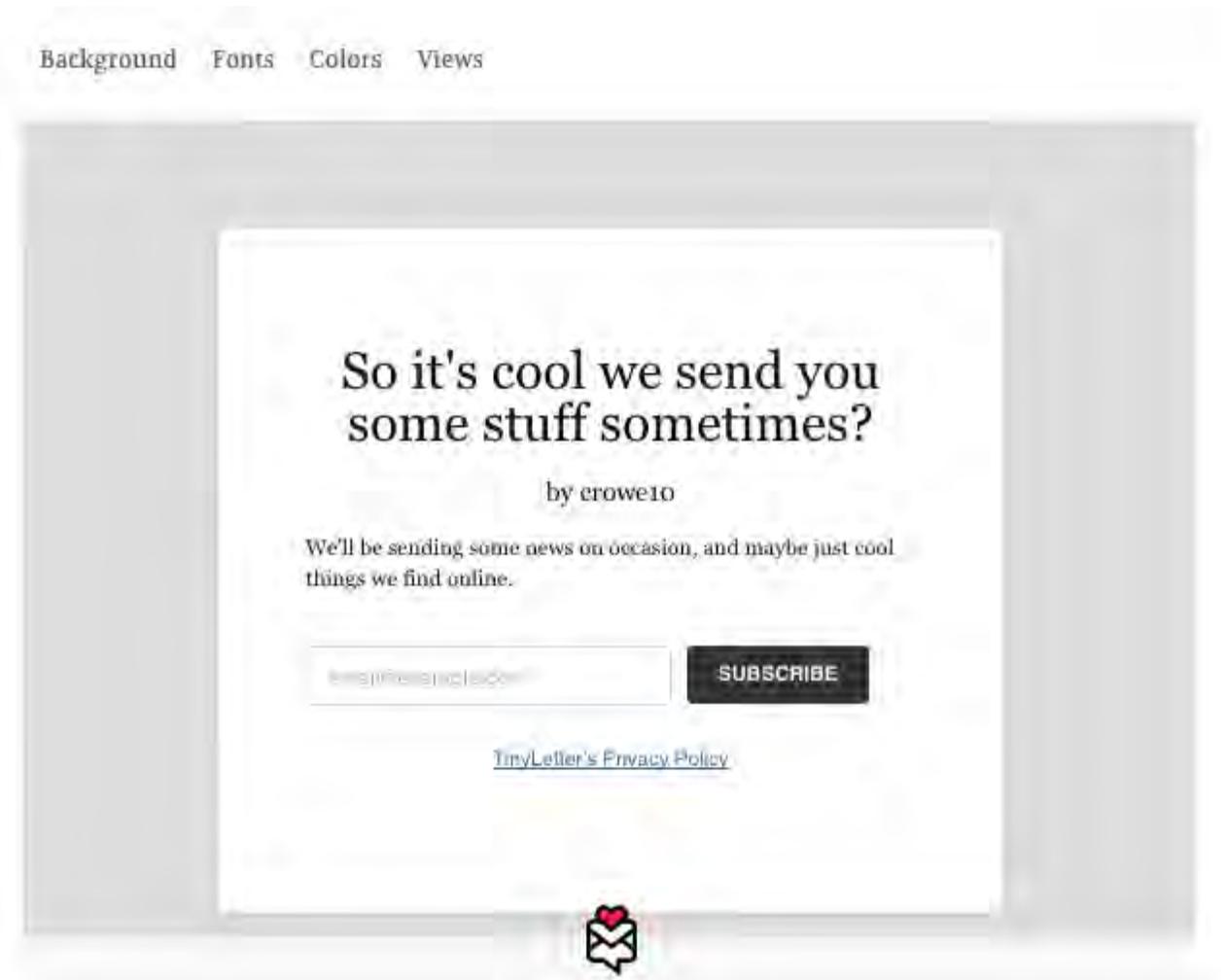
Any real estate CRM (customer relationship manager) worth the acronym will have intact some sort of email communication tool. So the idea of engaging a separate email marketing engine may not be top of mind for those already invested in a robust, prospect-to-close CRM.

However, smaller firms and marketing-savvy agents, or those who may not like the email capabilities of whatever enterprise system their company installed, may be interested in

TinyLetter, a simple, refined and very capable Web-based email marketing application.

The sale

Email newsletters remain powerful components of any agent's marketing mix. Your previous clients, prospects, friends and colleagues should all be on your list and receiving something at least twice a month. When it comes to reaching out via email, you don't have to overthink it, which is what tends to pull so many agents into marketing quagmires. And that's what makes TinyLetter so terrific: its ease of use.



TinyLetter is made for people with ideas, not just people with something to sell. The interface is simple and built for writers; it's not bogged down with analytical metrics and open rates and vexing click-through percentages.

Compose message

Subject

Make letter public

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears

Message

Saved to drafts

B **I** **S** **U**

Send Now

Send Preview

Save Draft



0 words | your record: 190

But I digress.

TinyLetter encourages simple messaging. Yes, you can add images and links, but you're not presented with a visually challenging compose screen that defaults you to code or favors media-heavy communications. TinyLetter knows that text-based messaging still has the most impact for nonretail brands.

Even the more technical aspects of launching and managing email newsletter are made easy with TinyLetter. The subscribe page that you can embed on your website is simple to design and just a matter of copying and pasting when it's ready to go. You can also customize your confirmation email and unsubscribe links. All of this is done via the "design" link, which is part of the main menu of features.

Now, a great-looking and compelling email marketing effort is meaningless without disciplined list management. You can add subscribers by either manually entering their address, uploading a .CSV file or through your Gmail account. (Almost any existing contact management tool will allow you to export your contacts as a .CSV file.)

Add subscribers

TinyLetter has a limit of 5000 subscribers per account. [Need to import more subscribers?](#)

Emails

One email address per line

Add To List

Import Contacts

Upload CSV file

Browse

Your CSV file should only contain email addresses

Upload And Import

Import From Gmail

We won't store your credentials

Connect To Gmail

To view a subscriber's reading habits, just click on their name. Metrics presented are total opens, unique opens, total clicks and unique clicks. If they seem uninterested after a while, just remove them. Remember, subscribers who never open your message bring down your readership percentage. Don't be proud of your subscriber count; be proud of your opens and clicks. That means people trust what you send them.

The menu gives you a clean look at sent messages as well, from which you can resend a successful letter and view overall metrics for that message.

One very slick component of TinyLetter is the capability to send a message without having to log in. Create your message in another email client and send it to the custom address supplied for you in your TinyLetter profile. It automatically routes the letter to your subscriber base.

TinyLetter integrates social media via Twitter cards. When your message is sent to Twitter, you're provided a number of visual options for how it will appear in your followers' feeds. This is a great way to earn new readers. You can also send out your subscribe landing page and create more shareable content.

Share your newsletter

Share a link to your newsletter's landing page or embed a signup form on your website.

Your subscribe form link

```
https://tinyletter.com/crowe10
```

Embed code for your site

```
<form style="border:1px solid #ccc;padding:3px;text-align:center;"
action="https://tinyletter.com/crowe10" method="post" target="popupwindow"
onsubmit="window.open('https://tinyletter.com/crowe10', 'popupwindow',
'scrollbars=yes,width=800,height=600');return true"><p><label for="tlemail">Enter
your email address</label></p><p><input type="text" style="width:140px"
name="email" id="tlemail" /></p><input type="hidden" value="1" name="embed"/>
<input type="submit" value="Subscribe" /><p><a href="https://tinyletter.com"
target="_blank">powered by TinyLetter</a></p></form>
```

The close

TinyLetter was developed by the crew behind MailChimp, so you know that user interface and message authenticity drove its development. And, yes, it's free.

To repeat, email marketing is not dead. Not by a long shot. Overly complex emails embedded with large image files and preceded by poorly constructed subject lines, however, are indeed ripe for burial. If you use TinyLetter, congratulations; your email marketing strategy will remain among the living.

[Sign up for our daily real estate tech review newsletter, delivered weekly to your inbox.](#)

Do you use TinyLetter? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

HOMESNAP PRO

TECHNOLOGY

Homesnap Pro puts people first in a new approach to leveraging MLS data

Pictures are worth not only a thousand words, but an entire real estate market



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 12, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

In "Hamlet," Polonius said, "... Brevity is the soul of wit. ..."

The French philosopher-mathematician Blaise Pascal gets credit for, "I'm sorry this letter is so long, I didn't have time to write a shorter one."

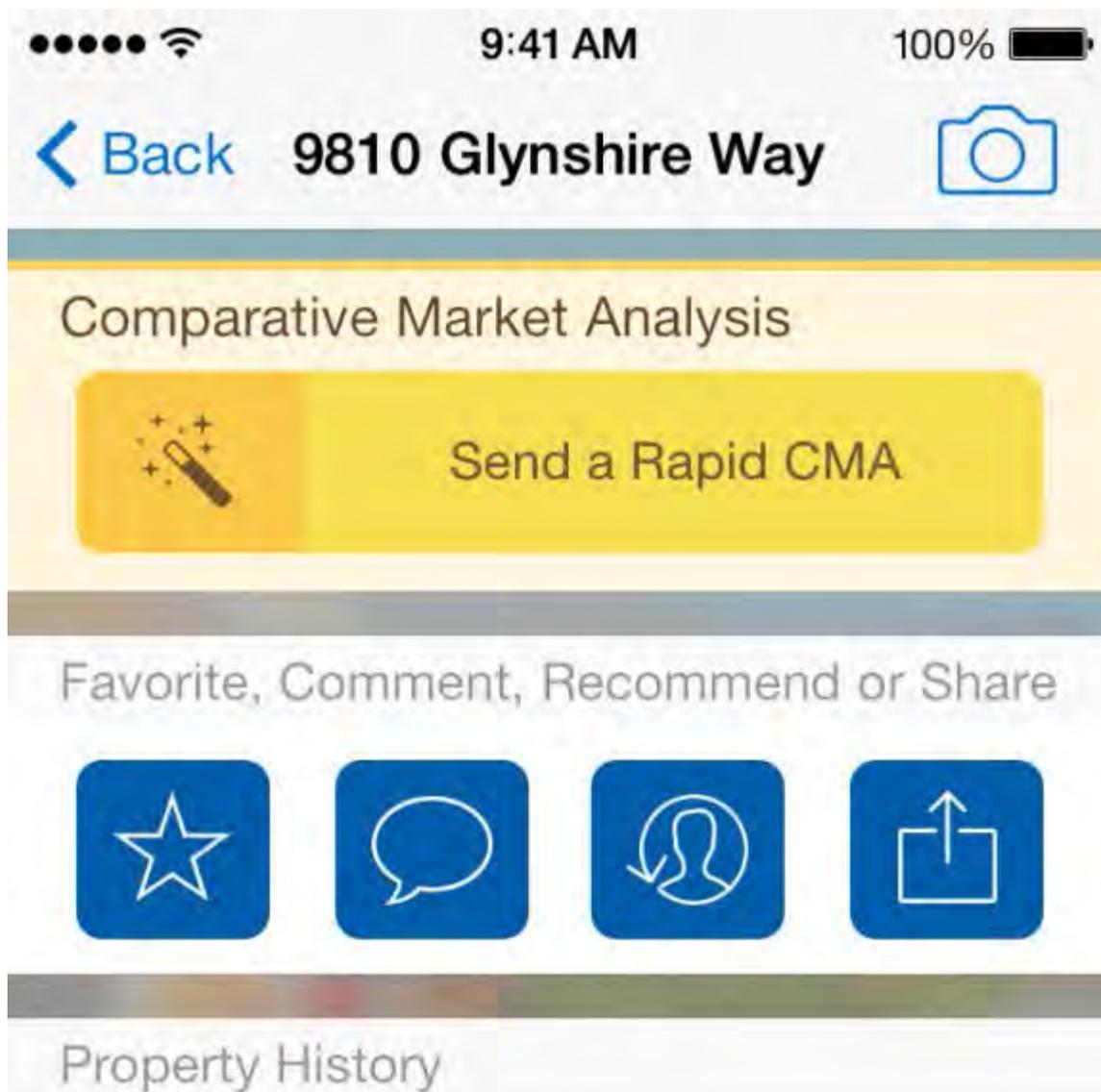
Internet marketing practices suggest we limit content to around 500 words or else it will be branded “long form.” Add to the mix the everyday use of social media shorthand and the seemingly ubiquitous, always grating misuse of “literally,” and it’s safe to say the value of our beloved language is at a crossroads.

And then comes **Homesnap Pro**, a home search app that makes pictures more powerful than ever before. Methinks our language needeth a defibrillator.

The sale

To assuage Polonius, Homesnap Pro makes smartphones into very smart phones.

Already boasting a Bieber-esque fan base, Homesnap Pro is a slick piece of mobile software that evolved from agent use of its original consumer-facing version, which was launched three years ago. It pulls property data from a vast association with tax record offices, MLSs (multiple listing services), and Google and Bing mapping tools.



\$1,349,000

8 Days

\$1,299,000

2/17/14

On Market

Current

Date	Event		Price
2/20/14	Price Change		\$1,299,000
2/17/14	For Sale		\$1,349,000
11/7/13	Off Market		

News	Homes	Agents	Me

Homesnap Pro offers a level of data integration the market hasn't seen before, certainly not in a mobile app.

While not nationally accessible yet, Homesnap Pro currently works with seven of the nation's 20 largest MLSs. And if you're lucky enough to work in one of those, you'll soon know just how engaging your historically tepid MLS interface can actually be.

Property information, agent contact information, their listing histories, showing instructions and school information are all easily found in Homesnap Pro. The interface looks sharp, the buttons are fat and easy to navigate, and it's visually efficient and fun to use.



Shows Well

Contract: Home Warranty

Disclosures: Lead Based Paint,
Property Disclaimer

Possession: Negotiable

Security: Electric Alarm

Dual Agency: Yes

Compensation

Commission: 3%

Sub Agent: 3%

Var Rate: Yes

Showing

Days: All Days

Times: 9 AM to 7 PM

Instructions: Call Owner First,
Sentrilock Lockbox

Name: Kaiser Soze

Home #: (703) 597-1233

Office #: (202) 701-7359



News



Homes



Agents

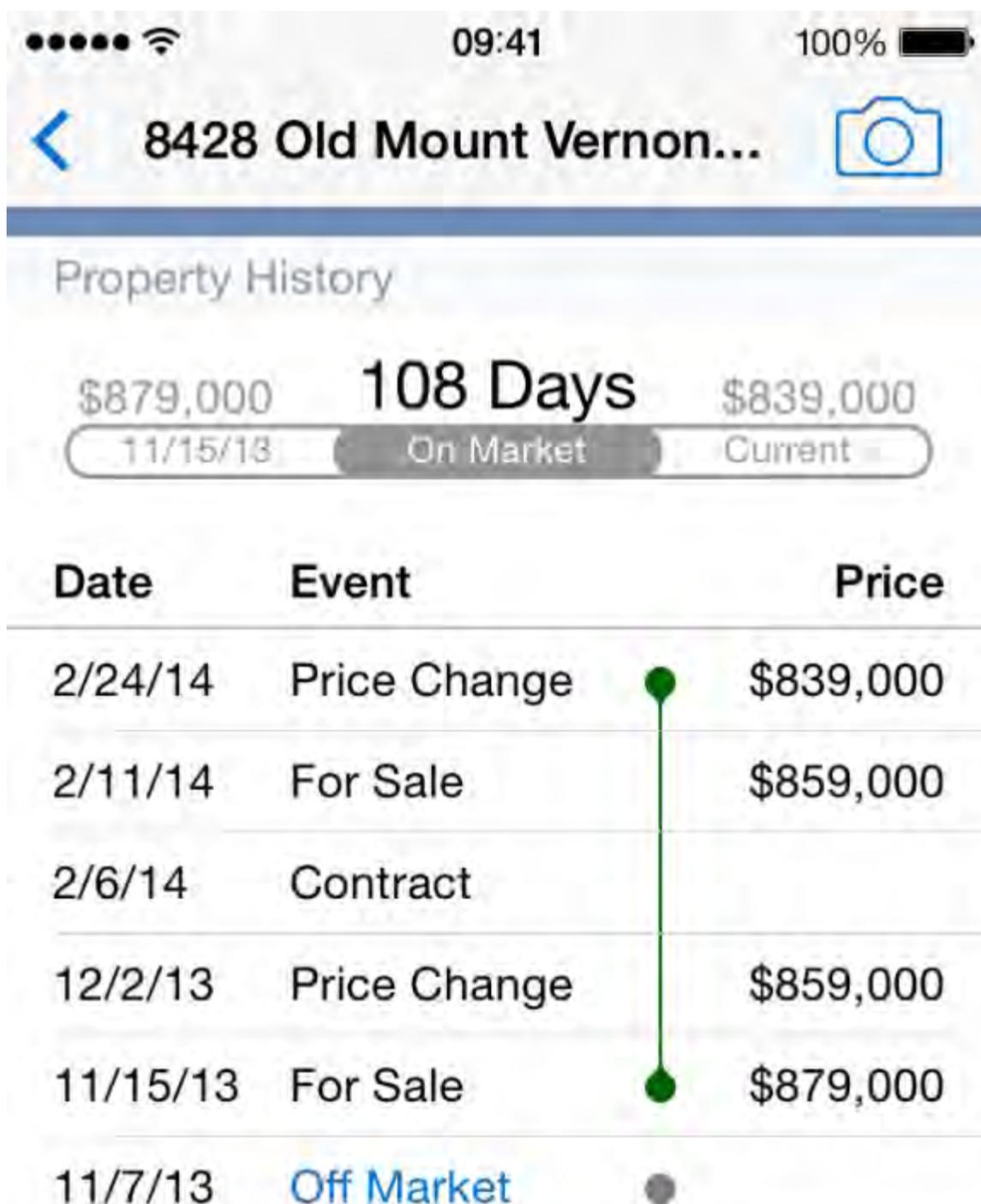


Me

Homesnap Pro is especially empowering for highly mobile agents, providing them with a number of ways to reach clients or prospects. The “Rapid CMA” (comparative market analysis) feature really stands out. Tap it while looking at the subject snap and Homesnap Pro presents 12 sales comparisons and 12 similar listings. Select three of each, tap “next,” enter a recipient, and in a few moments an in-depth CMA is generated. A sample PDF I viewed looked quite comprehensive.

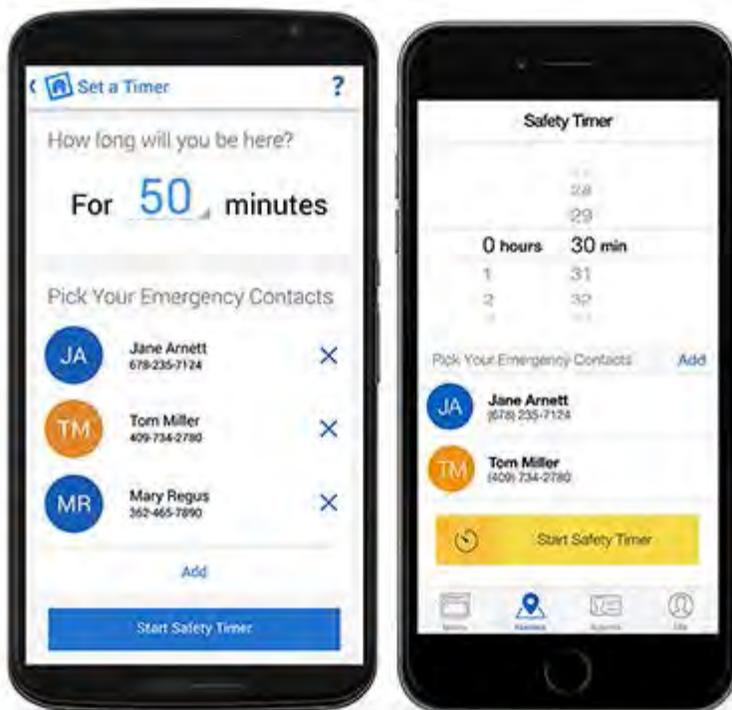
But the key here is efficiency. It's so much faster than having an assistant scroll through your browser-based MLS, or having to "get back to" a client when they surprise you with an address while touring. If you're still needing to earn the signature of a prospect, Homesnap Pro could really help.

And in terms of working with clients, Homesnap Pro lets you send snaps directly to them, and vice versa. It's clear that the app has made customer interaction a priority. Once you invite a prospect to view your Homesnap Pro profile, you become their default market contact. This provides you an inside view to what they may be considering. Even snaps they take out of your market offer insight into what they're considering.



9/26/13	For Sale	●	\$899,000
4/27/12	Sold	●	\$745,000
9/1/10	Sold	●	\$215,000

I'm a big fan of the practically integrated Agent Safety Timer. If you don't shut it off in time, it texts an emergency contact that you need help. It reminds you to cancel when things are cool, but also includes a fast cancel should an inadvertent alert send. Can it spray mace or unleash an overly protective Doberman? No, but it's a nice extra bit of caution to exercise, especially given the fact that many on-the-go agents schedule last-minute showings with loosely screened buyers.



Homesnap Pro also integrates map views with ease, allows agents to associate data with multiple MLS memberships and does a great job of connecting agents with other agents.

The close

Homesnap Pro is a powerful, very useful app for today's heavily mobile real estate professional. It takes a complex, esoterically connected world of people and property data and assembles it for practitioners in a compelling, color-coded, creative interface.

I wasn't surprised to learn that 17,000 agents and more than 700,000 homebuyers are connected via Homesnap. I envision that number growing quickly.

Pictures really are worth a thousand words. In fact, they're worth an entire real estate market.

Literally.

[Sign up for our daily real estate tech review newsletter, delivered weekly to your inbox.](#)

Do you use Homesnap Pro? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

AM OPEN HOUSE

TECHNOLOGY

AM Open House makes a simple marketing event a statement for better business

Sign-in at your open house event just went digital



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 13, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

The pitch

We don't see many Ford Pintos on the road.

Despite a recall-filled production run of nine years, the dumbed-down, knock-kneed sibling of Ford's wildly popular Mustang simply failed to keep stride with consumer demand and 55-

mile-per-hour speed limits. And when it comes to moving critical business data from one system to the next, paper is quickly following the tracks of the now infamous, flammable, slope-backed subcompact.

Thankfully, the developers of an app called [AM Open House](#) have taken notice of the delays and hassles caused by paper-based visitor sign-in sheets used at open house events. By using an iPad or Android tablet as an information kiosk for prospective buyers, agents can make open house events into something much more rewarding than another weekend at work.

The sale

The concept is simple: Visitors to your open house type their name on a tablet screen instead of signing a paper form on a clipboard. It's a common electronic form we've all completed a bunch of times on most websites, so its intent won't frighten even the most tech-phobic tire-kickers.

AM Open House also asks for the prospective buyer's credentials. For example, are they already working with an agent? If so, they add the agent's name and number. It also inquires as to the buyer's mortgage wherewithal and asks how they heard about the event.

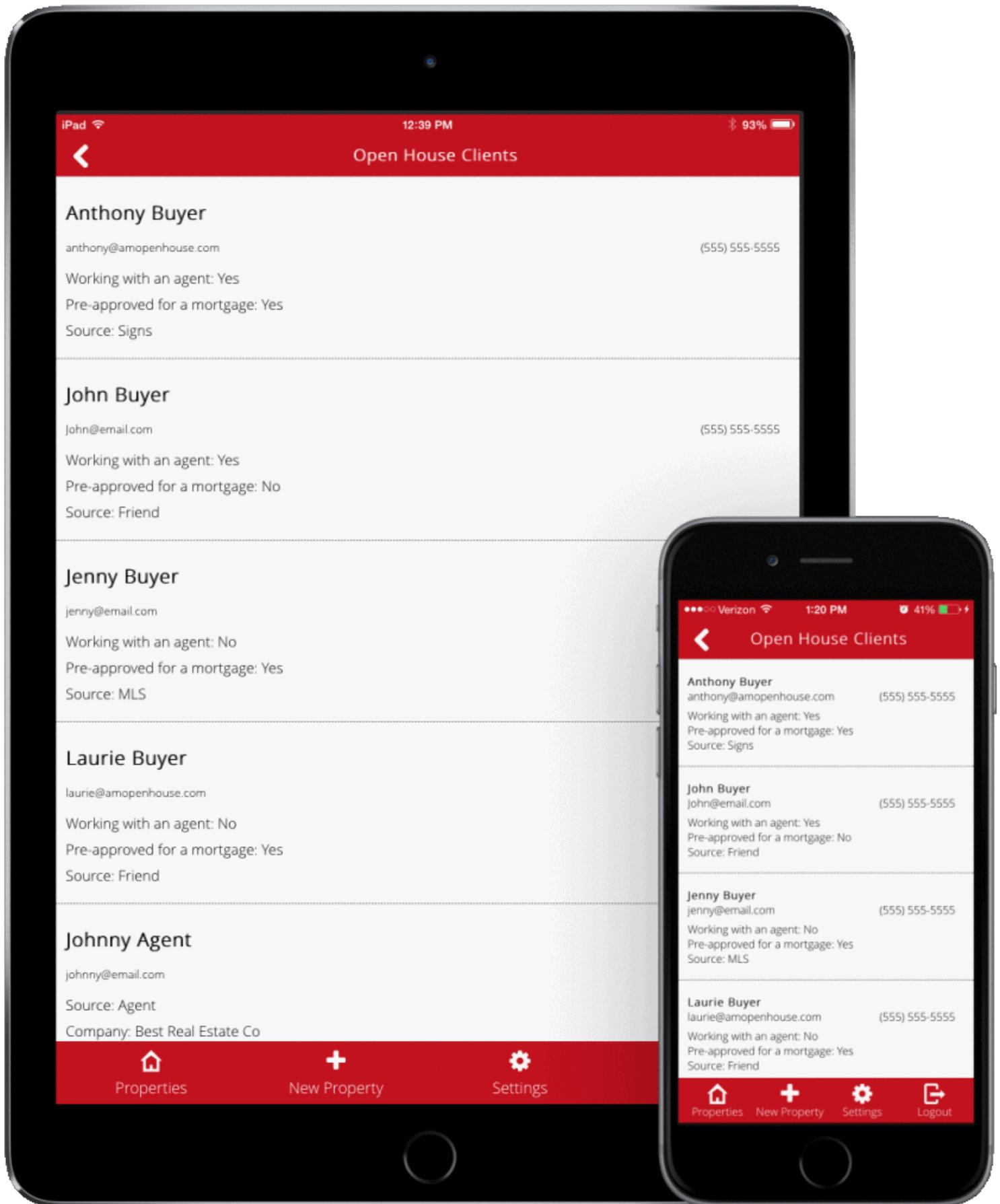


However, before you put up the inflatable yard art, you have to create the event on the app. That's simple, too. It takes filling in a few property detail fields, uploading images, and entering

the dates and times.

As nice as AM Open House is, all of its power lies in what takes place outside of the house. I like that it's very easy to share the open house with your social networks. Five of the major cat video sharing outlets are connected, and via a tap or two, your client's listing is out there. The posts look good, complete with dates, times and images.

After the cookies have been served and all the hands are shaken, agents can sit at their client's charming breakfast nook with all of that natural light and scroll through an in-depth summary of all sign-ins. You can then send a custom email to all attendees at once that will include a link to a brief Web page on the property (assembled from the event details you entered) and your contact information.



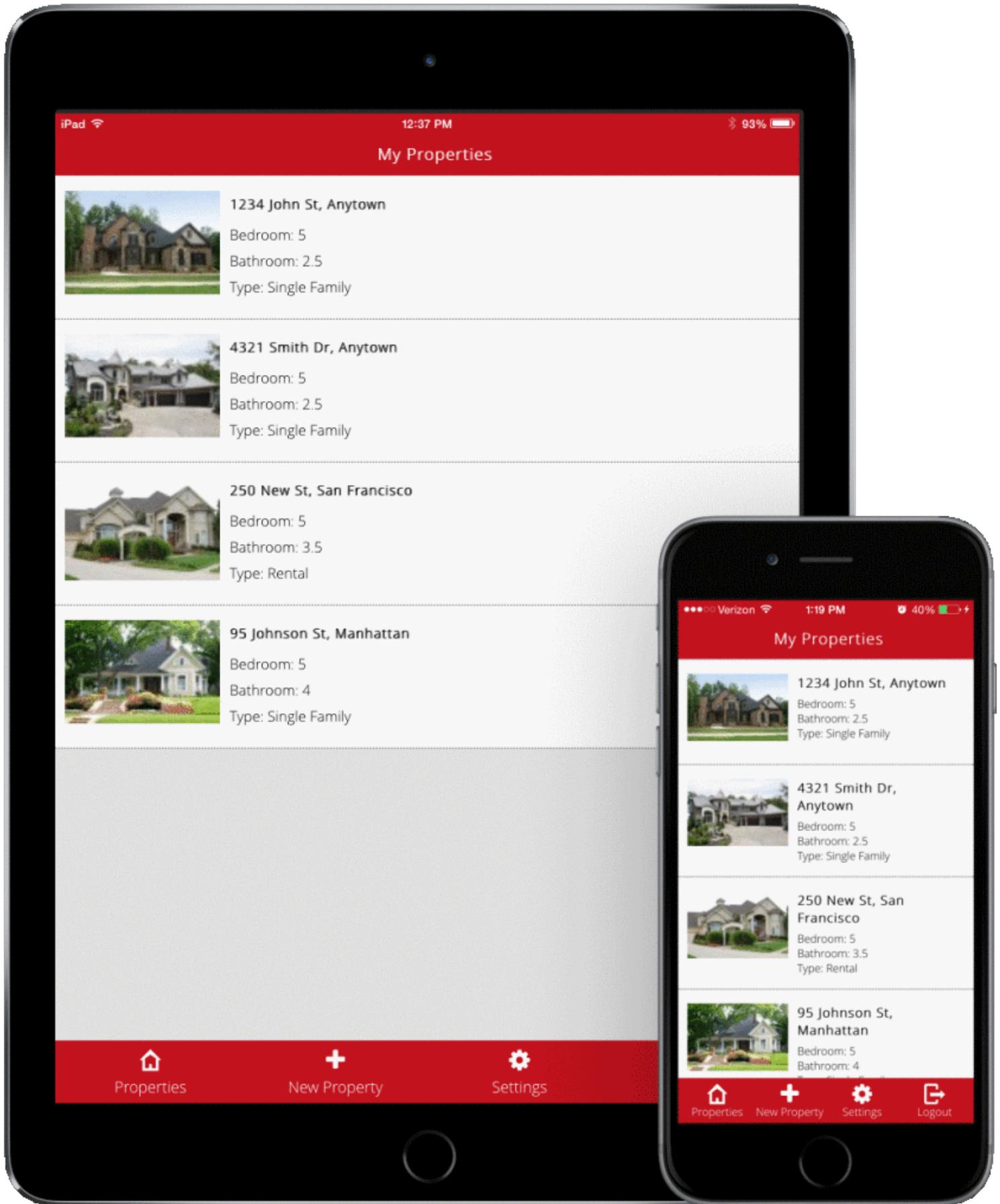
Brokerages can also have their app customized to reflect branding, which also includes

representation in respective app marketplaces. Nice benefit.

From there, AM Open House connects with one of 15 different CRM (customer relationship manager) partners to get that data into a system that will leverage it. This is where the app excels, and where I see its best avenue for growth: connectivity.

Translating names and information written by hand is tedious and risk-prone. Handwriting can be hard to read or be rekeyed into on-premise CRMs incorrectly.

Ultimately, doing so further infects the data with human intervention. The quicker you can use the data provided by the market, the more good you can do with it. This is why electronic forms and document automation are so superior to paper. No printing. No scanning. No emailing. Data is born electronic; why must we hold it in our hands to prove it's real?



It's been 4 1/2 four-year presidential terms since electronic signatures became legally binding.

Yet, today, one of you reading this has used a pen to sign a listing agreement or an offer that was printed on paper.

The close

If I'm using AM Open House as a platform for how simple and smart I believe it is to replace paper with Web-based transaction processes, then so be it. Real estate agents are early adopters, gadget hounds and exceptionally mobile. Yours is an industry to push for acceptance of such efficiencies. This app reflects that.

AM Open House announced this week that it is now doing business in Canada. That's a good sign. The simplicity and connectivity that accompany this app will do a lot to perpetuate the concept that information flow is best left unabated by the hindrances of paper, printers and scanners.

And most of all, people.

When's your next open house?

[Sign up for our daily real estate tech review newsletter, delivered weekly to your inbox.](#)

Do you use AM Open House? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

REALVOLVE

TECHNOLOGY

Realvolve is building a new way to manage agent-client relationships

Software helps you manage people, not just clients



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 16, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? Email him at craig@inman.com.

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The pitch

When I started this column, I did so with the intent of wanting to create awareness about what's out there while adding insight about perceived value. Even better if a few features here and

there stand out. Yet I want readers to know that there is more to investing in real estate technology than just the product's feature set. For a true partnership to exist, it helps to understand how your potential vendor partner approaches the product and an industry's needs. Is the vendor offering just a few real estate-oriented modifications of an existing product? Like an Audi badge on a Volkswagen chassis. Or was there true intent to use technology to enhance how you do business?

In [Realvolve](#), I see a team, and a product, that puts a great deal of value in relationships. And what's more critical to a real estate agent?

The sale

First and foremost, Realvolve comes across as a software company, not a real estate software company. This is important because it means they spend a great deal of time finding out how to solve problems. I've sat for hours, mouth agape, in programmer meetings watching them dissect issues as vexing to me as string theory so I could emerge with a marketing slant of some kind. Still, through the haze of jargon, it's easy to recognize the effort to take a complicated challenge and use code to offer a simple solution.

The image shows a screenshot of the Realvolve CRM dashboard. At the top, there is a red navigation bar with the Realvolve logo and menu items: DASHBOARD, CALENDAR, WORKFLOWS, and TEMPLATES. On the right of this bar is a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar, the dashboard is divided into several sections. On the left is a sidebar with a search bar, navigation icons, and a 'Contacts' list. The main content area features a contact profile for Dave Rowland, a 'Notes & Correspondence' section with social media posts, and an 'Activities' section with a 'FOLLOW-UP' task and a 'Tags' list. At the bottom, there is a dark navigation bar with page numbers 1-5 and links for 'FEEDBACK', 'PRIVACY POLICY', and 'TERMS OF SERVICE'.

It's in the nature of a programmer to want to take down walls or find tunnels through them. Programmers are true creatives, and it's fascinating to watch. I've not been privy to a day in the office at Realvolve, but I'm sure I'd witness the same type of discussion on matters like connecting Evernote folders to a specific client. Or how to best integrate a very innovative tool like Zapier to assist in workflow automations. Sorry for the cliché, but that's thinking out of the box.

And it's thinking about real estate agents. You multitask, you multidevice, and you multiply your contacts. Realvolve synchronizes that multitude of communication tools and methods to assemble them neatly into a smooth, efficiency-driven workspace.

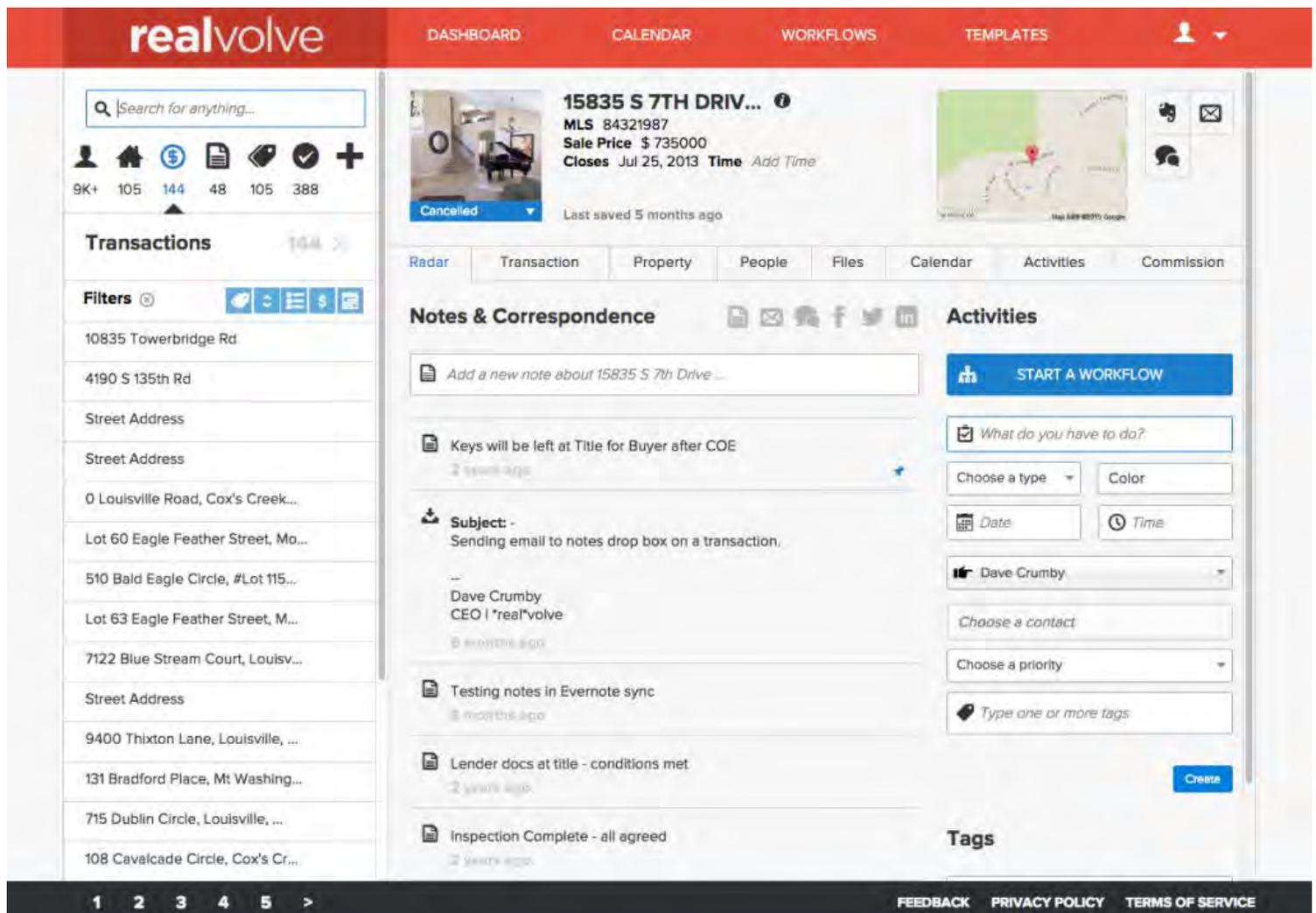
The screenshot shows the Realvolve dashboard for user DAVE CRUMBY. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Navigation:** Top bar with 'realvolve' logo and menu items: DASHBOARD, CALENDAR, WORKFLOWS, TEMPLATES, and a user profile icon.
- Search & Stats:** A search bar with the placeholder 'Search for anything...'. Below it are icons for various metrics: 9K+ (people), 105 (properties), 144 (leads), 48 (deals), 105 (tasks), and 388 (messages).
- Recently Viewed:** A list of recent contacts and properties, including Kristina Wise and Andrew Hills.
- Realvolve News:** A feed of articles and social media posts, such as 'Get REAL' and 'Surrounding yourself with people who inspire ideas is invaluable'.
- Notes & Correspondence:** A section for managing notes and social media interactions, featuring tweets from Kristina Wise about workshops and business insights.
- Activities:** A calendar view showing scheduled events, including 'DEV CALL' events on Sep 13, 15, and 16, 2013.
- Workflow:** A prominent blue button labeled 'START A WORKFLOW' is located in the top right of the main content area.

For features, there are many you'll be familiar with, like a contact management module that enables you to monitor social media feeds, assign documents, track lead origination, and actively communicate via email, text and social media direct messaging. Realvolve also includes a nice calendar tool, task management capabilities, and a sharp tagging system that is searchable systemwide. So any file, note, property or contact can be found quickly.

I see Realvolve as a workflow engine with CRM (customer relationship management) capabilities. You can add properties, for example, around which you can manage a market progress from listing to close. Since getting the business is different from doing the business, I ultimately see the CRM and workflow capabilities as separate entities of a single system. And considering the **pricing**, that's a lot of intrinsic value.

"Radar" is the clever and very apt name assigned to the Realvolve component that encapsulates your most pertinent communications per listing, transaction and contact. It's sharp, a nice bit of quick-glance accessibility.



Users can create a compendium of message templates for efficient communications about anything from inspection notices to stolen yard signs. Any situation can be made more efficient this way. “Great. The Miller kids played elevator again. Send the ‘garage door is broken’ email to the showing agent.”

I’d be remiss if I didn’t note how good-looking Realvolve turned out. This is important. Visual interaction is a powerful component of user experience. There’s a reason why you get sticker shock when the local marketing company quotes you \$4,500 for a new logo. Can your nephew do it in Microsoft Word? Sure. But rest assured, your sister’s will be the only fridge it decorates.

Point is, when you’re dealing with this much information, how it’s organized and presented is crucial. Where will your eyes lead? What deserves the most screen real estate? All crucial stuff that Realvolve gets right.

The close

Will Realvolve land you more listings? Maybe; it does help you manage those you have now quite a bit more effectively. It also looks great, doesn't cost much (\$67 per month for up to five users/10,000 contacts), and is sure to grow more appendages of efficiency. Might want to be around for that.

I think Realvolve does more than help you manage contacts; it helps you manage people. Sound hokey? Maybe. But would it sound that way to your clients?

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Do you use Realvolve? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

MARKETO

TECHNOLOGY

Marketing automation with Marketo can mean big business for real estate firms

Look outside of the industry for a way to automate business processes



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 17, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Real estate agents need to look outside of the industry for ways to automate business processes.

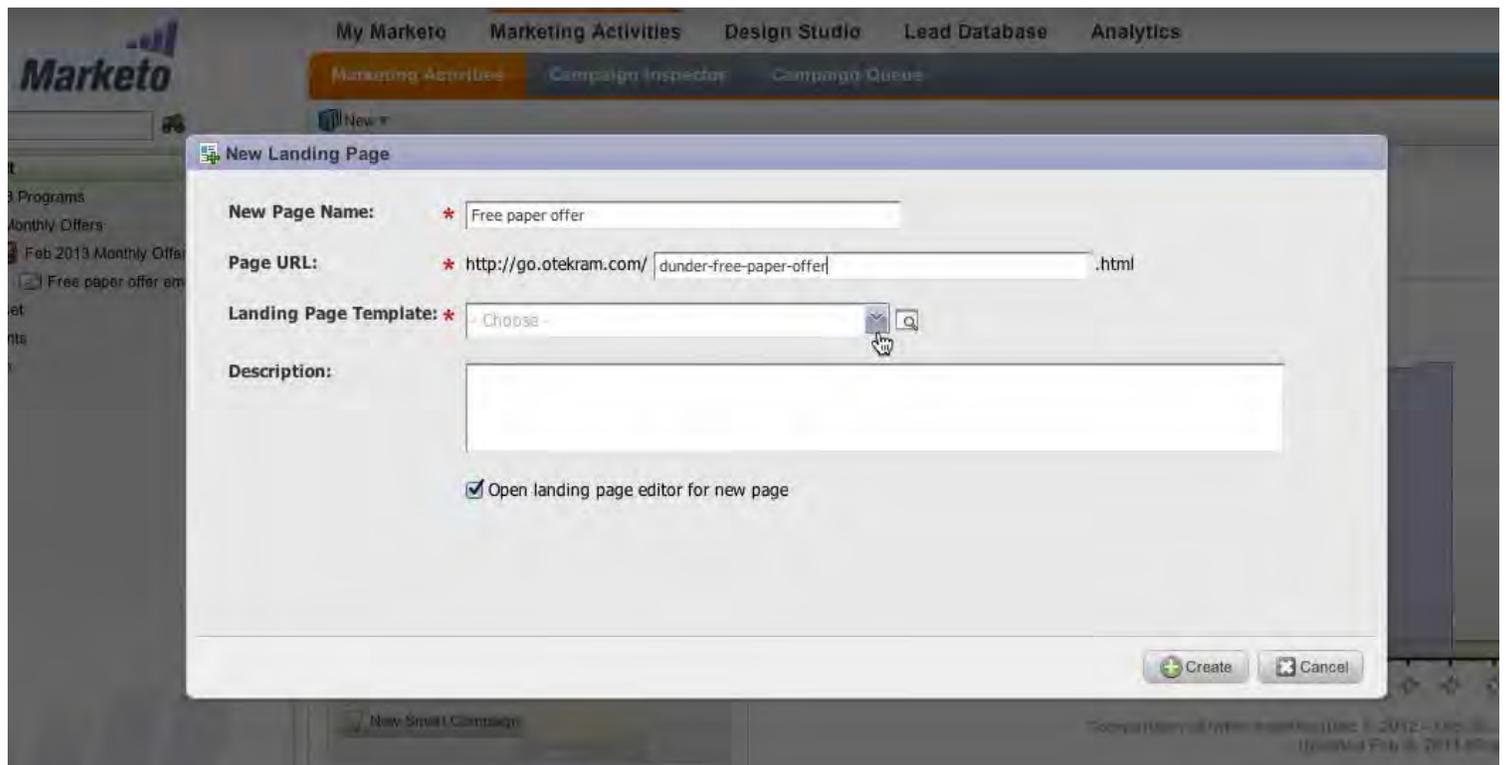
Better stated, look for tools that will help you be better at running your business, not just being better at selling houses.

Make sense?

I include in this milieu things like [Marketo](#), a powerful enterprise marketing automation solution that has way more than you probably need, but also a number of features that could make the investment very worthwhile for the right-sized firm. Here are a few of them:

The sale

1. Landing page creator



Landing pages are single Web pages that connect a marketing tactic, like a postcard or email, with your extended sales pitch. Today, any direct mail or email effort you launch should have a landing page. Its content needs to be related to what you sent while furthering your message and presenting a direct call to action. Landing pages also allow you to easily measure the effectiveness of your marketing, as well as earn better contacts by giving away free content, like a market report or “5 Tips to Prepare Your House for Listing.”

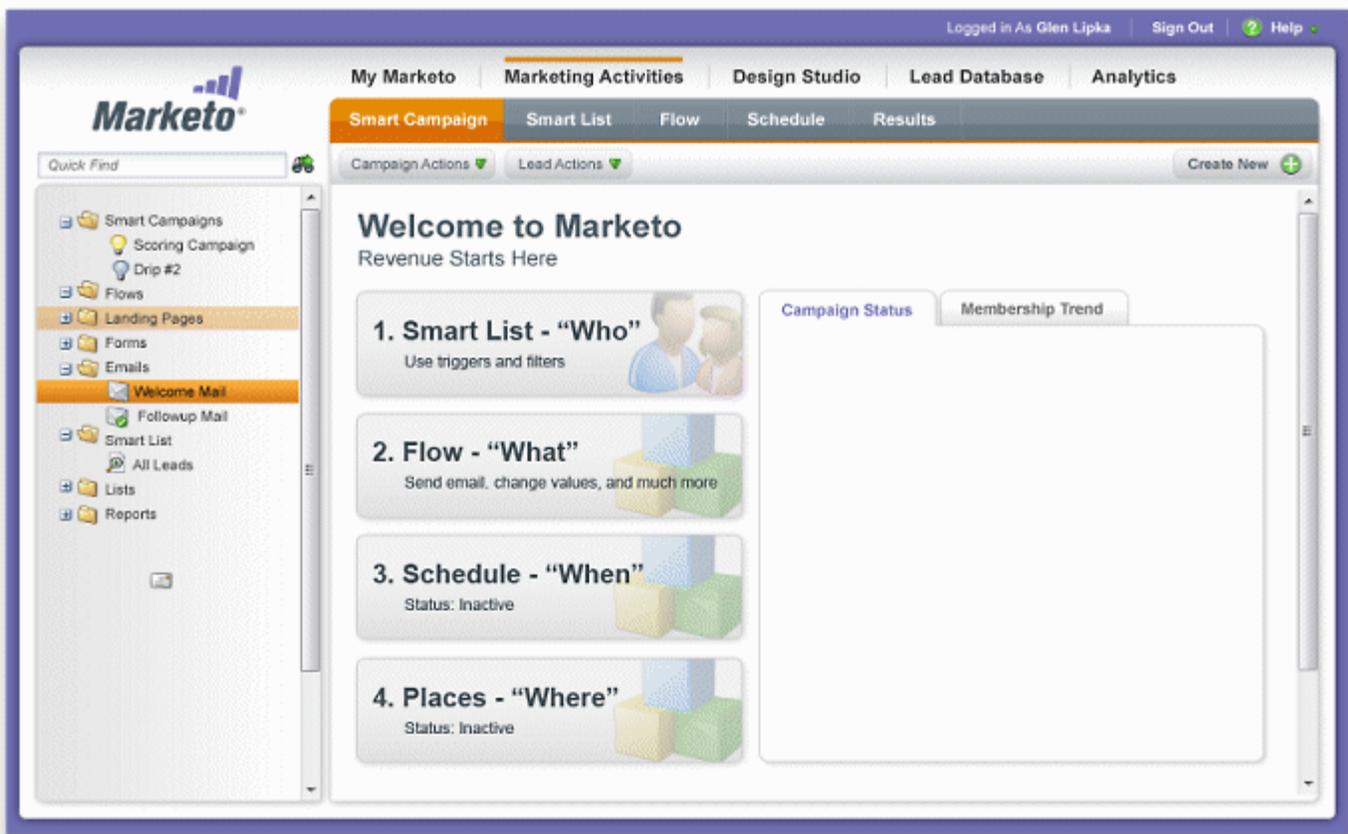
Marketo’s landing page creator completes the process in a few steps, not at all unlike building

a PowerPoint slide deck. Templates can be made, logos dragged and dropped, and contact forms inserted. These forms could be listing data-centric, like “Tell us about your home,” or buyer-related, such as “Tell us about your dream home.”

By connecting your print and electronic outreach with a tool like Marketo, you can build a powerful, permission-based contact list.

2. Contact list segmentation

This isn't talked about a ton in real estate circles, but knowing whom to contact with what message is critical to effective marketing. You don't want to share with a current listing client an email about how well you help buyers get the right price. However, if you haven't segmented your contacts, that probably happens. And it won't look good.



Marketo has a SmartList function that enables you to drag and drop database fields to build highly granular contact lists from the data you capture via your landing pages. Segmentation increases the quality of your touches and is proven to increase open and conversion rates.

Give this some thought the next time you announce a \$1 million listing via mailing to a ZIP code where sales average \$300,000. “Oh, look, honey, something to line the bird cage.”

3. Sales insight

Some believe you can win at real estate by dedicating half of your day to simply dialing random prospects, hoping your referrals dropped your name or that the other end of the line isn't aware of the "do not call" list. Or you can leverage Marketo's sales insight to know which leads are ready for a call and which ones will waste your time, hanging up with a bad attitude about real estate agents.

Marketeto Sales Insight

Best Bets My Watch List Web Activity Anonymous Web Activity My Email				
View: My Best Bets Edit Create New View				
Name	Account	Last Interesting Moment	Status	Priority
Jeffrey Waits	Zthes Enterprise	Email: Clicked Link in 20-tips-improving-email-fulfill <i>1 week ago</i>	Lead	 
Sue Morber	Fixote, Inc.	Milestone: Accelerated lead nurturing; shows heavy interest <i>6 days ago</i>	Needs Analysis	 
Marc Lakowski	Eble Systems	Sales Email Clicked: Clicked link in email Eble Systems - Marketo Customers Milestone from patricia.roosa@demo.marketo.net <i>1 week ago</i>	Contacted	 
Rosa Simonich	Simonich Family	Web: Visited the pricing page <i>4 days ago</i>	Negotiation/Review	 
Jessica Cephus	Dbax Limited	Web: Searched for "Marketo" <i>6 days ago</i>	Contacted	 

The sales insight feature uses data gleaned from the performance metrics of your outreach efforts to create a traditional, time-honored balance between sales and marketing. The tool orders your call list by frequency of interaction with your marketing, which indicates a willingness to listen to what you have to say. So make it count.

Understandably, marketing automation probably isn't a term in the lexicon of most agents. I get it. Listings drive marketing decisions. However, it can be highly beneficial to have a message working for you when a listing isn't targeting a specific silo of the market. Print ads with your sales resume and a few postcards are fine; they can work. But how are you measuring them? How are they targeted?

Tools like Marketo help you condense marketing tasks and integrate them smoothly with sales. It avoids the shotgun approach that spends money on homeowners and buyers not interested in your services.

The close

Marketo is a heavy wrench; it's not meant for small operations. It has a Salesforce-driven CRM (customer relationship manager) that's proven effective, and it steps users through marketing plans that would be significantly more complicated to manage and measure offline.

The interfaces could use an update, and the pricing will send all but the larger players scurrying back to Inman for other recommendations. I also find it to be a clinical user experience.

Nevertheless, it's a robust marketing advantage for an agency that's willing to invest in their brand and put real structure around sales.

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Do you use Marketo? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

AGENTPAIR

TECHNOLOGY

AgentPair's agency branding feature highlights consumer-driven home tour tool

Smartphone app connects interested buyers with agents in real time



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 18, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Binge watching is a direct result of consumers wanting control. Digital content outlets like Netflix and Hulu are starting to release entire seasons of programming all at once. No wait between episodes.

Amazon's promise to get you something in two business days has changed retail shipping forever. We want what we want, when we want it.

For example, when I want to tour a house as soon as possible, I'll use [AgentPair](#).

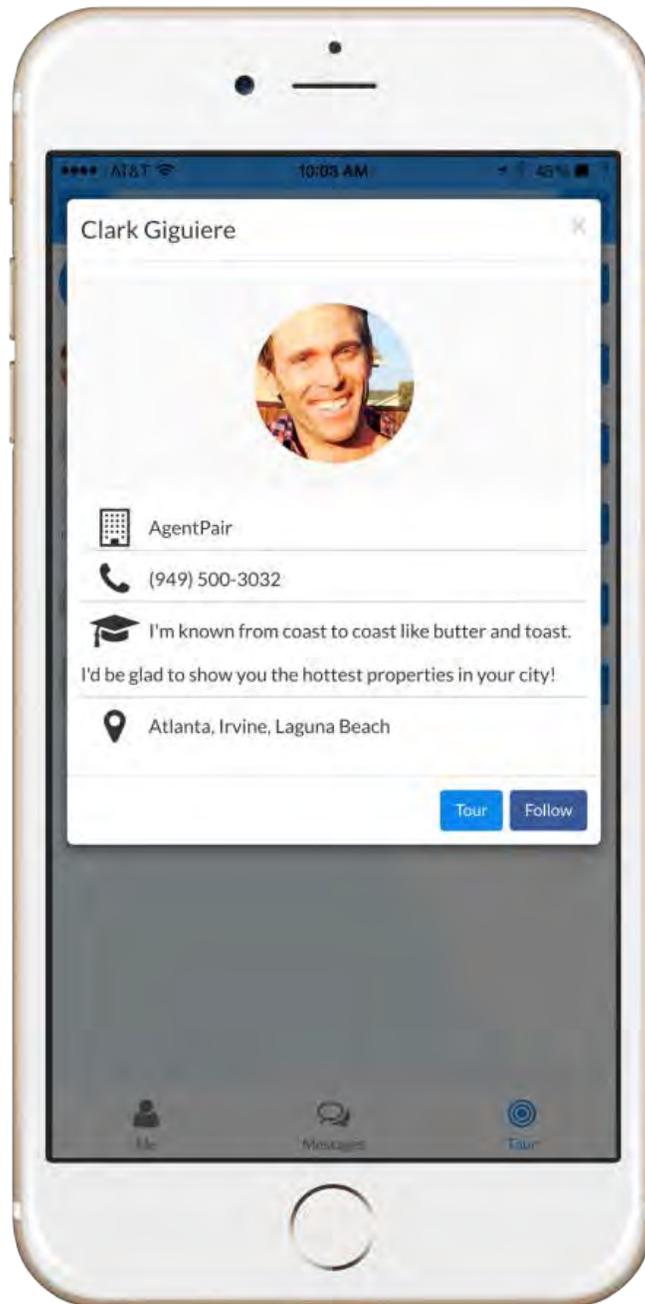
Or will I?

The sale

From how certain foods are arranged in the grocery store to the average number of seconds an online ad can be presented before we click the "skip" option, real estate agents should pay close attention to how consumers interact with brands and content.

We are impulsive, and to make matters worse, hand-held communication is only catalyzing us. We can brush off an irate boss or forever remove a person from our social circle with a tap or leftward swipe.

Thanks to AgentPair, prospective homebuyers can do the same to you.

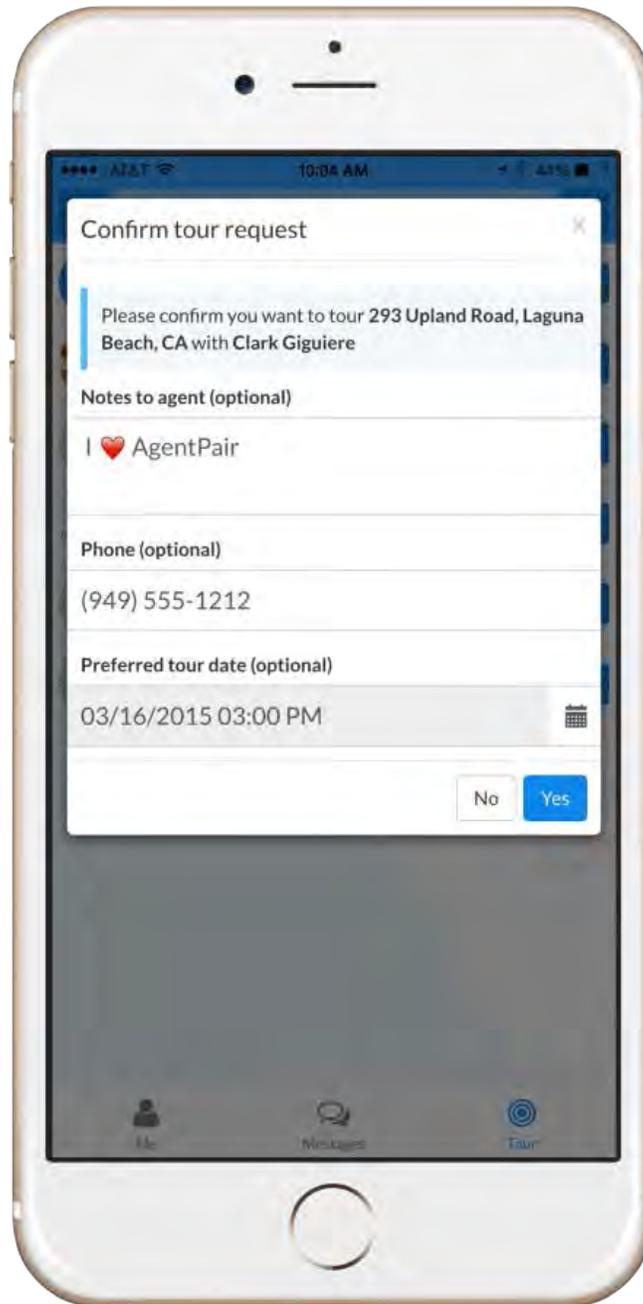


You may have read about AgentPair; they've been onstage at Inman Connect. If you're not familiar, the app connects antsy home shoppers with available agents. Or, at least, agents who want to make themselves available, because you have a "do not disturb" option.

When prospective buyers drive by a house for sale and happen to have a few minutes, the buyers can hop on the app and let any nearby agents know that they want to get inside, as soon as possible.

Agents can register with AgentPair to advertise themselves to buyer-users. If you're around and responsive enough, you'll earn their business. Maybe. This app is certainly a good way for the buyer market to exercise a lot of agents before they decide with whom to work.

Welcome to 2015 consumerism.



How much can you do for me before I have to pay you for it? This is the exact mentality that leads us all to expect Wi-Fi to be free, even though it clearly is costing somebody money to

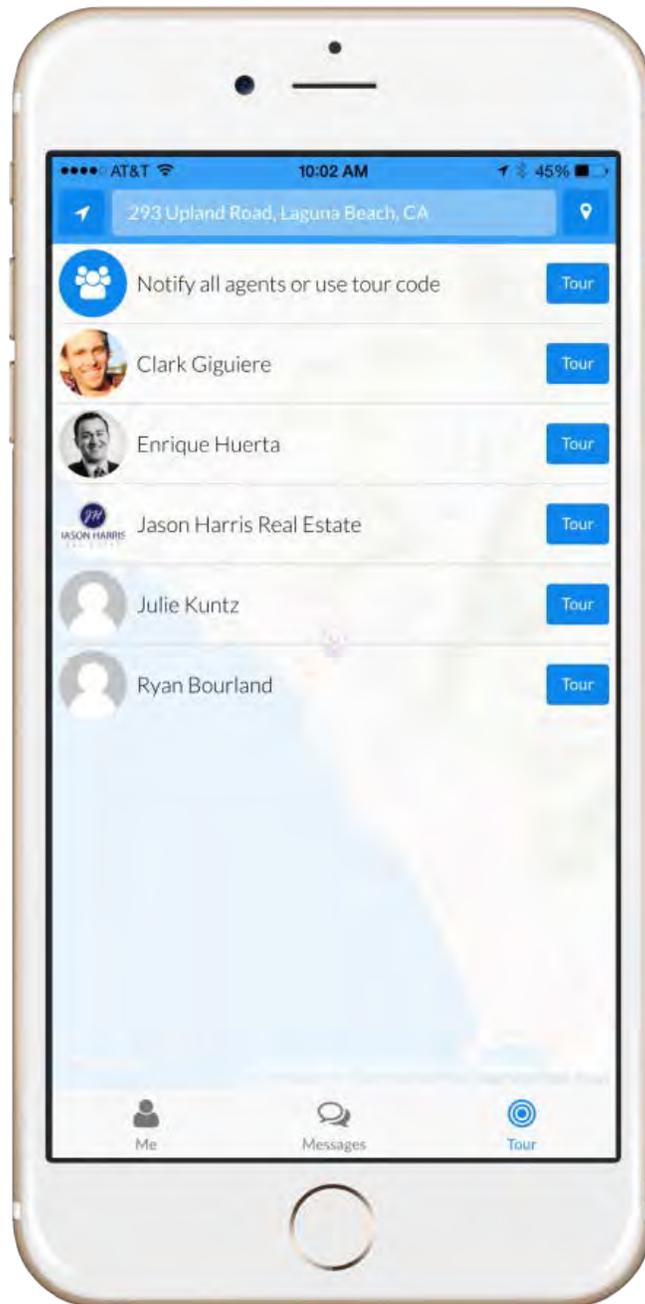
provide it.

Smart agents will acquiesce to the inevitable and respond to AgentPair notifications. Even if you can't get a buyer into a home, the first to respond will most likely win. As I said to AgentPair CEO Clark Giguere during our Google Hangout, it's not necessarily the content of a response that matters; it's the immediacy of it.

Still, it would help to do your best for the prospect. Will you make phone calls for them? Will you try knocking on the door if the listing agent isn't accessible?

Buyers can send out a "global request" to see a listing to all area AgentPair agents. They can also scroll through a bio and select an agent that way. Or, maybe they saw your AgentPair code on some collateral or a banner ad, so they plug that in to get your attention.

If I were a listing agent, I'd have my AgentPair code on everything.



Obviously, safety in the age of rapid-response mobile agency is critical. AgentPair addresses this by including an alert mechanism to inform team members of when you arrive and leave. Plus, showing instances and locations are logged. In essence, it's no different than responding to a phone call request for a showing.

Announced last week was an agency-branded version of AgentPair. This means you can use the app as your own, with your own look and company jargon. Current clients can be provided an instant, text-based method to reach out with showing requests and questions. They won't

see the other agents who are registered in that area. This is a powerful bit of marketing, especially for those teams who may not want to pin their hopes of a commission on the efficacy of their wireless carrier.

Agents more inclined to leverage mobile tech, those who build their own websites and send e-newsletters, could leverage this white-label option to further the promise of “always being there” for customers. It also demonstrates an awareness of how people expect to be treated in this age of instant communication. (But please, at least take the time to actually type. Emoticons are tantamount to cave paintings. Let’s all try to keep moving forward.)

The close

There’s a lot of practicality in AgentPair, and certainly an insightful recognition of consumer impulsivity. I hold no doubt that this app is ahead of its time. However, is that always a good thing?

Giguere referenced Uber in our discourse. While AgentPair is reflective of the ride-sharing app in that it uses a mobile device to connect consumers with a service, conceptually there’s much more to this new way to bum a ride. Uber users get an instant availability alert; they can see their driver; they know when he or she will arrive; and they know what kind of car they’ll be in. It is these elements of perceived control over the transaction that the incessantly myopic taxi industry inconceivably can’t grasp. AgentPair is highly similar. But like Uber, is the agent market ready for the switch?

I also wonder: To what extent will CRM solutions begin to integrate such a feature? That’s more of a business question than one of functionality. Perhaps some partnership opportunities exist for AgentPair in that regard.

I’m most intrigued with a more robust subscription version of this app that will launch next year. It will include an analytics feature set to make the act of a showing a house a much more powerful asset to your operation. There’s a lot of data in a simple text message, and AgentPair is seeking to leverage every one and zero.

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Do you use AgentPair? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

HATCHBUCK

TECHNOLOGY

Hatchbuck is marketing automation utility for smaller agencies

Program can streamline marketing efforts and control your messaging



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 19, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

In my effort to reach out into corners of the technology space that may appear dark or unreachable to real estate agents, I was referred to the oddly named but sleekly designed

sales and marketing software called [Hatchbuck](#).

If [Marketo](#) is a “heavy wrench,” then the Web-based Hatchbuck is the versatile multitool for marketing automation carried around in your front pocket.

The sale

Every marketing effort, and thus successful sale, started with “a contact.” Naturally, if you can’t mine them, you can’t process them into a usable commodity.

So Hatchbuck does that by fusing with a multitude of common contact sources such as LinkedIn and Outlook. If you’re an Excel person, please stop reading.

I’m kidding.

You can import Excel contact lists, too. Actually, since Hatchbuck is targeted at small-business owners, they seem acutely aware of the fact that countless business leaders still depend on Excel to manage information. (I should just be quiet about Excel.)

The screenshot shows the Hatchbuck dashboard interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Hatchbuck logo and menu items: Dashboard, Contacts, Deals, Tasks (with a notification badge for 15), Tools, and Reports. Below the navigation bar, the main content area displays the details for a campaign titled "Path to Better Fitness: Nurture Campaign".

Basic Info

- Campaign Name: Path to Better Fitness: Nurture Campaign
- Description: (empty field)
- Nurturing Campaign: Yes
- Locked: ON (with a lock icon)
- Folder: Prospect Campaigns
- Type: Regular Campaigns

Participants

Total Participants	326
In Progress	259
Completed	67
Unsubscribed	0

Created by Jamie Miller
on Apr 29, 2013 03:50:30 PM

Campaign Steps

Hatchbuck lets you collect a number of new contacts, as well, via its simple HTML form builders that can be embedded on your website or linked to from the email campaigns it helps you send.

In my piece on [Marketo](#), I rambled on about the importance of segmentation in marketing.

Sorry to strip the head on this nut, but it's that important. The real estate agency that perfects what messages go to what prospects is the one that will win more listings.

Hatchbuck takes the segmentation effort almost completely out of your hands, demonstrating not only a solid example of automation but of marketing know-how. The software automatically sends "List A" content that's related to List A. The same for List B. You get the idea.

Thus, if you have a list of people interested in single-family rentals, they'll receive dripped content about being a landlord and how to set market rents. Or why they should hire a property manager. The folks behind Hatchbuck deem this "personalized automation."

The screenshot shows a web interface for selecting an email template. At the top, there are "Exit" and "Back" buttons. The main heading is "Select an Email Template to Continue". Below this, there is a search bar and a "Page 1 of 1" indicator with navigation arrows. A left sidebar lists categories such as "All Categories", "Newsletter: Generic", "Newsletter: Rocket Th...", "Newsletter: Cloud Th...", "Newsletter: Mailo The...", "Newsletter: Hatchmai...", "eCommerce", "Special Occasions", "Real Estate", "Holidays", "Events", and "Fitness". The main content area displays a list of templates with columns for "NAME" and "DATE CREATED". Each template entry includes a thumbnail image, the template name, and a "Select" button with a right-pointing arrow.

NAME	DATE CREATED
Coupon	Jul 3, 2014
Coupon 02	Jul 3, 2014
Event	Jul 3, 2014
Happy Birthday	Jul 3, 2014

The emails you can build are easy to do and include everything you can do with any other email marketing solution. You can build a number of templates.

Like [Realvolve](#), Hatchbuck lets you "tag" prospects according to interest, viability, ZIP code,

what have you. I like this a lot because it enables users to interact on their own terms. The success of a software solution depends heavily on how employees not involved in the decision choose to embrace it.

As many of us know, in software training scenarios, nomenclature can be a hindrance to effective adoption. Tags can improve engagement, assist in prospect tracking, and, ultimately, better your return on the technology investment.

Hatchback does more than email market, though. You can keep real-time tabs on the veracity of your prospects. Those that are better will be scored higher and made more prominent. You can produce reports to track revenue, daily interactions and email effectiveness.

The screenshot displays the Hatchback CRM interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Hatchback logo and menu items: Dashboard, Contacts, Deals, Tasks (with a notification badge for 90), Tools, and Reports. A search bar labeled 'Find a contact' is also present. The user's name, Tegan Richardson, is shown in the top right corner.

The main section is titled 'Deals (13)'. Below this title is a summary bar with three colored segments: a teal segment for 'Pending' (4 deals, \$52,000.00), a dark grey segment for 'Won' (8 deals, \$69,400.00), and a teal segment for 'Lost' (1 deal, \$0.00). To the right of the summary bar are two buttons: 'Actions' and '+ New Deal'.

Below the summary bar is a table of deals. The table has columns for 'NAME', 'SALES REP', 'CLOSEDATE', 'DEAL VALUE', and 'AGE'. The deals listed are:

NAME	SALES REP	CLOSEDATE	DEAL VALUE	AGE
<input type="checkbox"/> Intelispend Kristine (Abeln) Baldwin of Intelispend Prepaid Solutions	Tegan Richardson	May 01, 2013	\$6,000.00	4 month(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Spark Co Buck Anderson of Spark Co	Tegan Richardson	Apr 22, 2014	\$10,000.00	5 month(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Canon Industries Emily Daniels of Canon Industries	Tegan Richardson	Jun 10, 2014	\$5,000.00	4 month(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunphy Real Estate Phil Dunphy of Dunphy Real Estate	Tegan Richardson	Jul 09, 2014	\$31,000.00	4 month(s)

At the bottom of the interface, there is a footer with links for 'Getting Started', 'Help Center', and 'Marketing Services'. Below these links is the copyright information: 'hatchback © 2013 All rights reserved. V2.0' and 'Terms of Use · Privacy Policy'.

I should add that Hatchback looks great, too. If you haven't noticed yet, I will always upvote technology solutions with compelling, user-friendly interfaces. I believe it to be a critical component of effectiveness and programmer concern for the solution.

The close

There are always a few features and nice touches I can't fully cover. However, Hatchbuck's unique small-to-medium business model is appealing, and so is its start-to-finish email integration model.

This is a much more reasonable solution for real estate agent teams. The highest-priced version is only \$299 per month for unlimited users and 25,000 contacts. I find that to be the best option, especially on a month-to-month agreement.

If you're interested in streamlining marketing efforts or, at the very least, looking for a way to control your message, give Hatchbuck a serious look.

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Do you use Hatchbuck? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

REALTYBACKOFFICE

TECHNOLOGY

RealtyBackOffice offers busy brokers a better way

Automated transaction management that's fairly priced



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 20, 2015

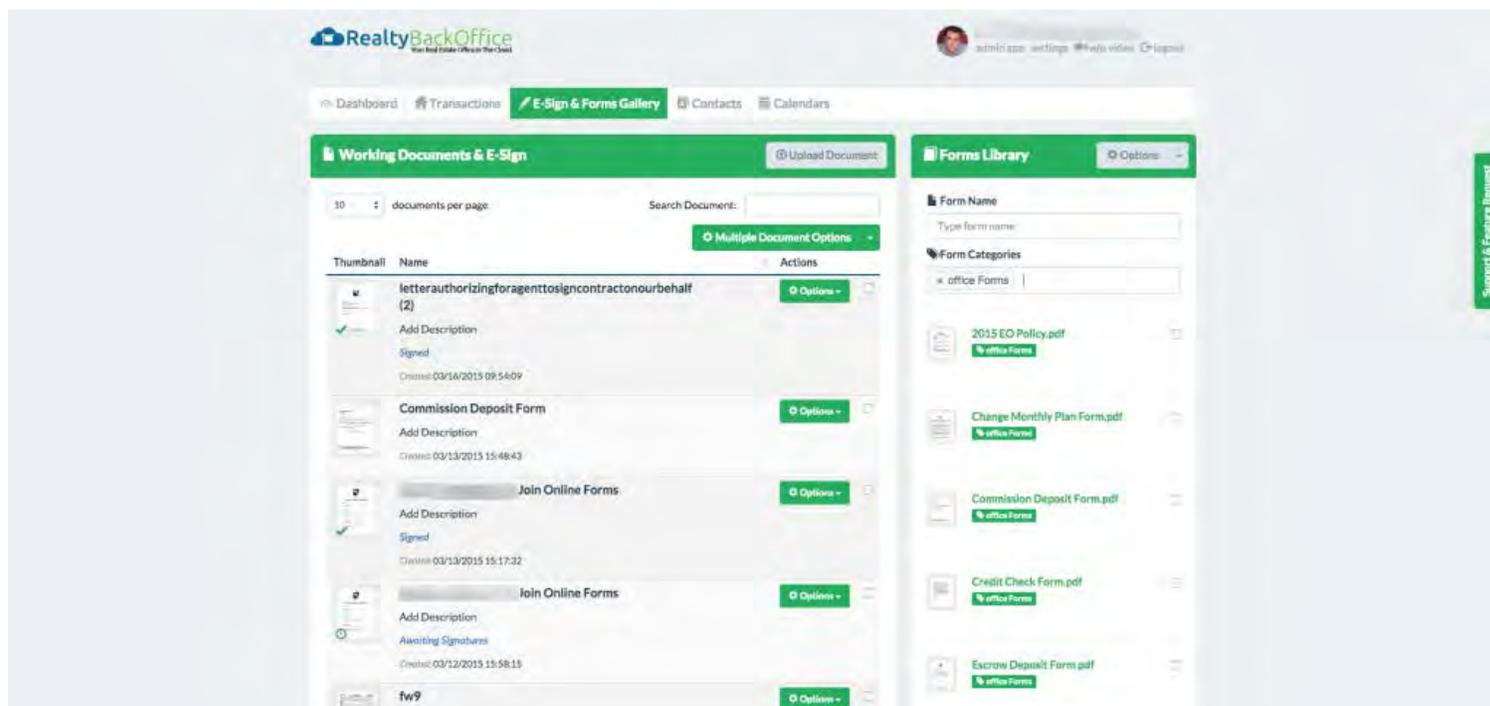
Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

Get a full week's worth of real estate tech reviews delivered straight to your inbox!

The pitch

UETA. The Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Amidst its many sections and esoteric formalities, UETA is what makes electronic signatures legally binding.

It's also helpful for agents to know that RealtyBackOffice is one of the few real estate office management tools that mentions it. I'm automatically a fan of any software platform that encourages electronic transactions.



Does this mean **RealtyBackOffice** is the only right solution to streamline your agency's operations? Well, let's find out.

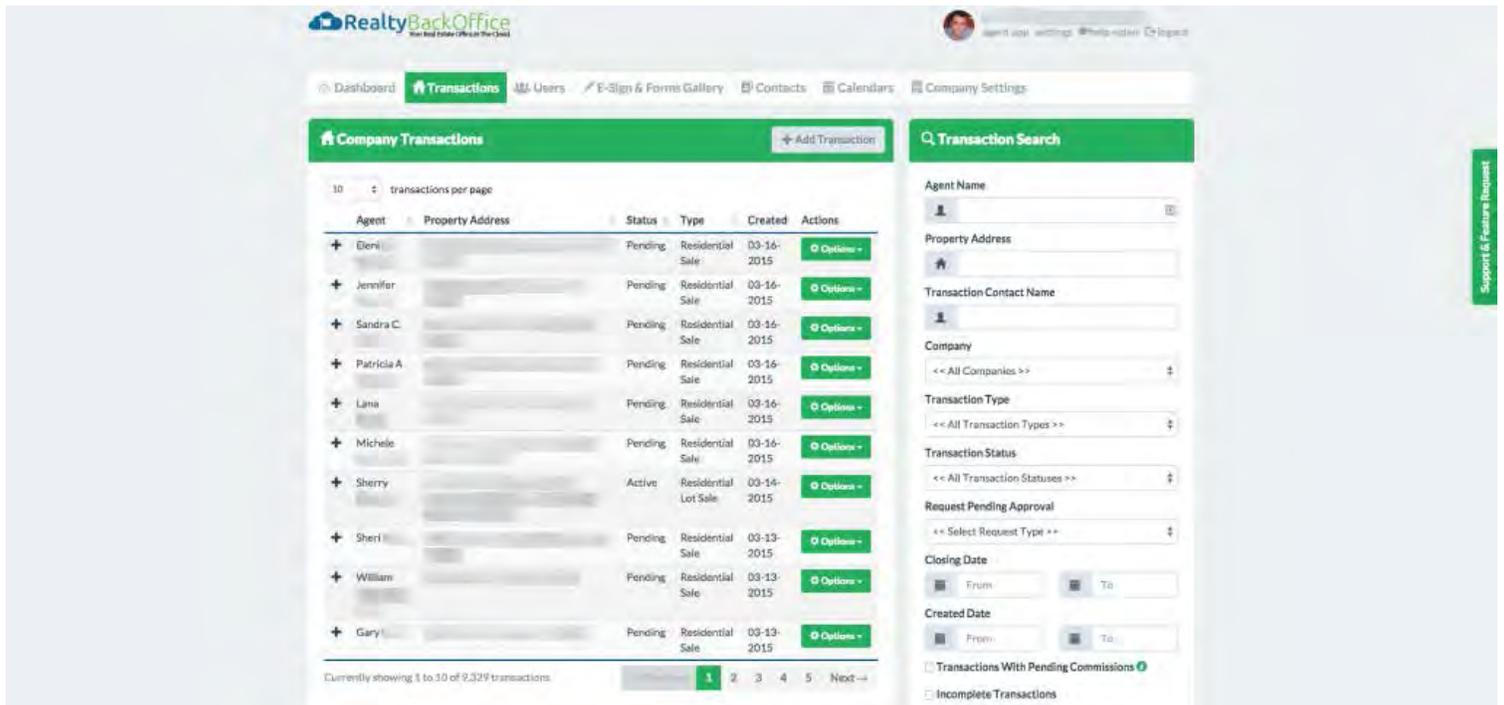
The sale

First, a plea: Can we please stop using the term “paperless”? It scares people. It's like “crossfit” or “skinny jeans.”

Trying to “go paperless” carries a stigma; it sounds burdensome and trite. That shouldn't be the goal. The goal should be a more efficient use of data, better customer privacy, improved workflows, quicker engagement with existing in-house systems, and overall enterprise efficiency.

When you focus on those, you learn paper has no purpose. Thus, going without it becomes a byproduct of a greater cause.

RealtyBackOffice's coupling of transaction management with a document library offers brokerages concerned with becoming a more technically proficient business a great platform from which to reach to the more complicated steps in the process. Mobile sophistication aside, the software automates agent oversight of the chores and tasks that typically bind office leaders to their desks.

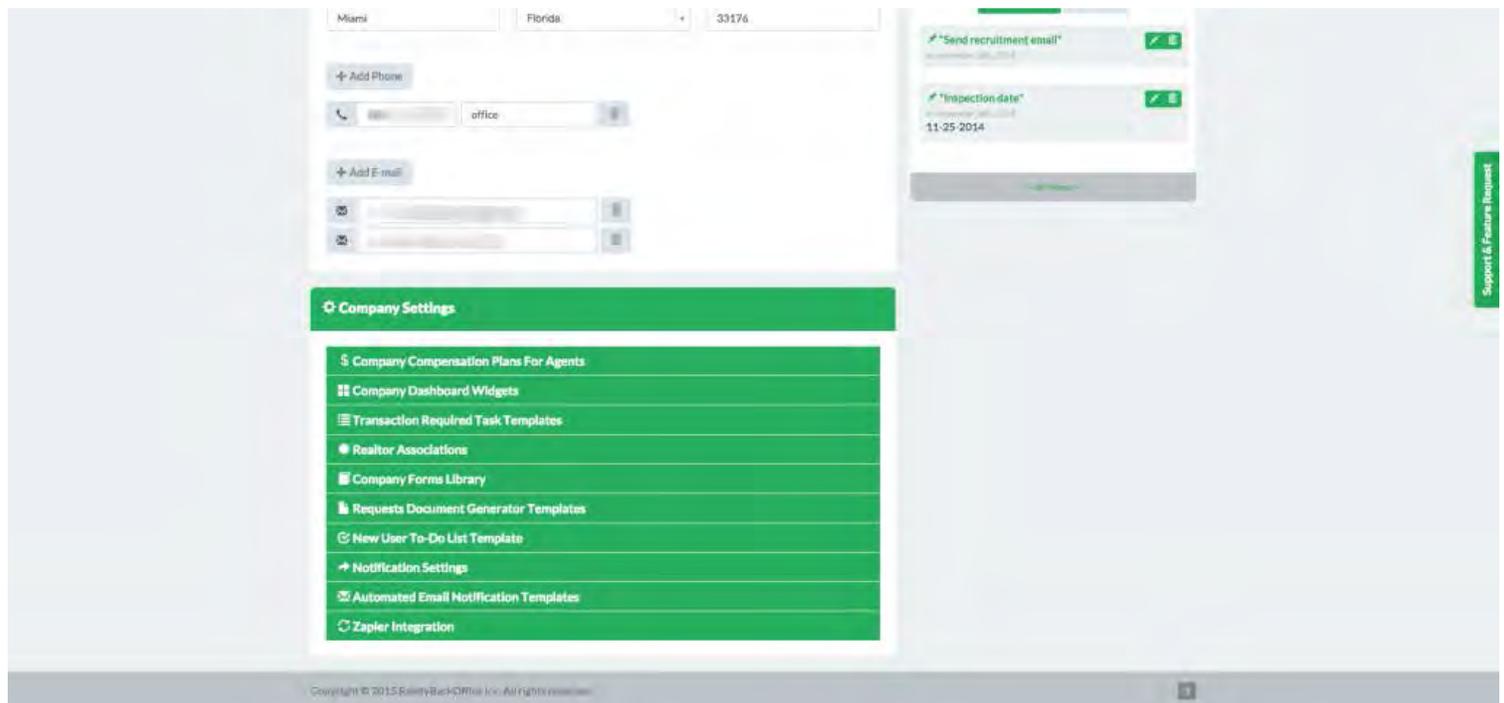


Its transaction management capabilities are robust. The array of vendors and tasks that fuel the cynical “this deal will never close” attitudes are addressed here with an extra-strength dose of relief through automation. You can add notes, upload documents (inspection reports, copies of checks, agreements, offers, etc.) and quickly search for all of them.

You generate e-sign documents on a tablet at your client’s breakfast bar, have them initial, sign, and then send it right into the enterprise and their inboxes. Let the client choose to print it; it’s their toner.



The documents are streamlined into the transaction, so monthly costs for another electronic document tool can be redirected here. You can also assemble closing disbursement agreements and create a template for future transactions. In fact, all kinds of transaction-oriented communications can be generated, saved and reused.



RealtyBackOffice is complemented by another integration with Zapier, the custom, cross-platform automation tool. (This is now the third instance of a Zapier connection I've come across. What's that tell us?)

The close

Most of what we see in the real estate technology space is focused on selling more listings, reaching more clients and making colorful emails easier to send. All beneficial, sure. However, I'm intrigued by software that reminds agencies, "Hey, we're running a business here ... not just a commission factory."

I also find it fairly priced right (40 agents for \$200 per month) and highly scalable. RealtyBackOffice is certainly worth a look.

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

DIZZLE

TECHNOLOGY

Oddly named and lacking value, Dizzle apps aren't ready for prime time — yet

True customization eludes this app-building program



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 23, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)

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The pitch

A few years ago, we sold a house.

We hired a multifamily property broker to sell it. Namely because I used to handle marketing for them. And I did some sales.

Most importantly, they had a proven, long-term marketing infrastructure. They could sell manhole covers just as well as they did 150-unit apartment communities.

While our house was on the market, I got a call from the buyer's agent who helped us years before. She was wondering why we didn't hire her to list it. Even though she was a terrific agent, we had no idea she was still in the business. We hadn't heard from her since our closing. Eight years prior.

If our one-time buyer's agent had used an app from [Dizzle](#), maybe she wouldn't have seen our place listed under a different broker's brand.

Maybe.

The sale

Software marketers use the word "custom" pretty loosely.

Here's my question: How custom is an app that offers the same functionality to every agent who pays the \$30 per month for it?

The only difference between a beige Toyota Camry and a red Toyota Camry is that the former is only slightly more boring to drive.

The process to get an app from Dizzle appears super simple. Set up an account, and they build you an app.

Dashboard reports & statistics

OVERALL STATS



RECENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Month Week Day



RECENT ACTIVITY FEED

Month Week Day

- Add to Contacts: Radys Childrens Hospital a day ago
- Call to Business: Radys Childrens Hospital a day ago
- Add to Contacts: a day ago
- Call to Business: a day ago
- Email to Business: From Above a day ago
- Call to Business: KPMG a day ago
- Email to Business: KPMG a day ago
- Call to Business: From Above 14 days ago

RECENT APP INSTALLS

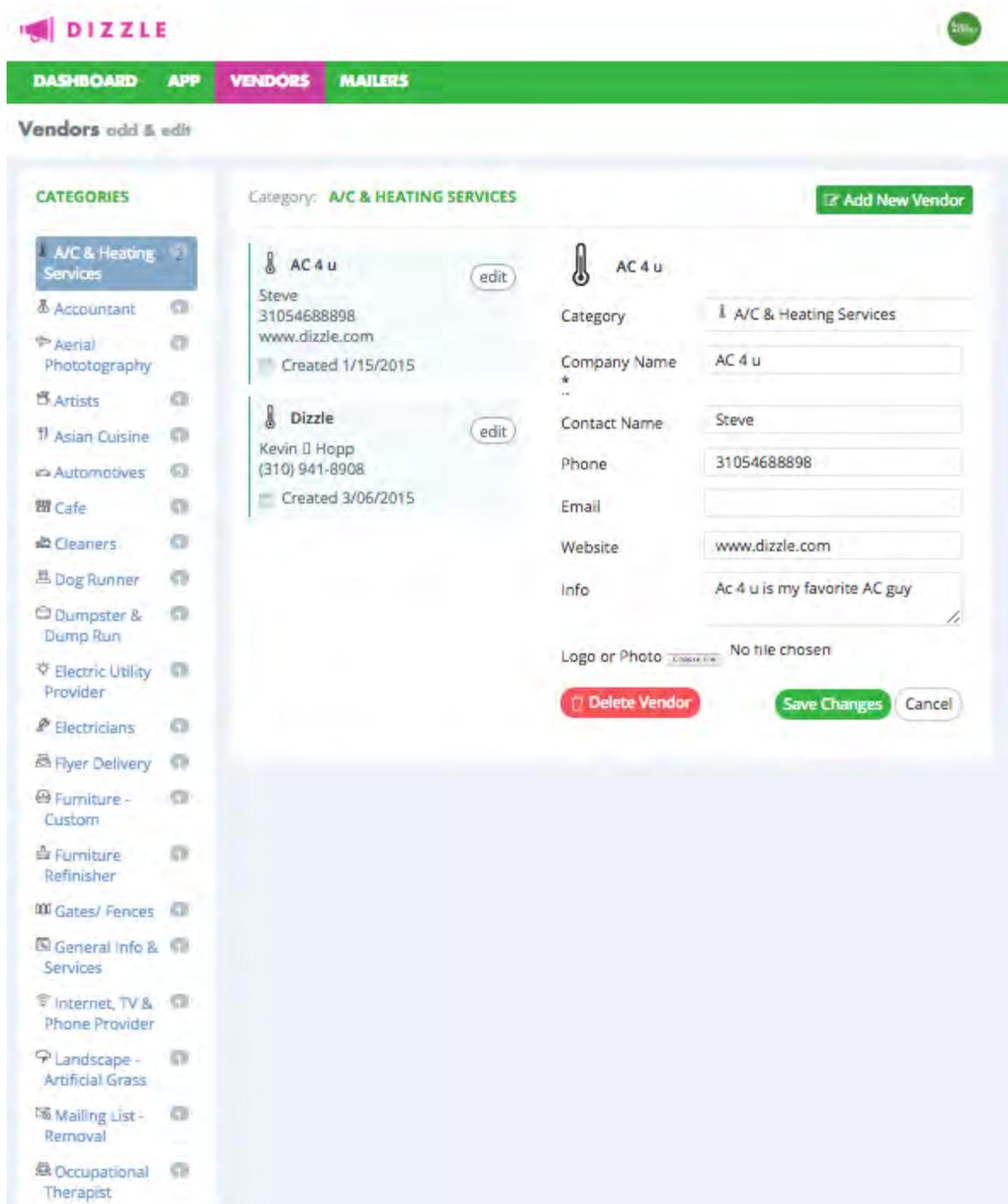
Month Week Day



It has your colors and logos and your Sears portrait. The primary thrust of the app is to list a number of local home services vendors under your name. Every time a user needs a patio sealed, they tap your face and scroll down to the company you prefer for such services.

The typical homeowner stays in their house for 11 years — that’s one more year than a decade. That’s a long time to have an app on your phone. Plus, I think it’s safe to assume that second-

time buyers, if in the same city, may already have a trusted team of professionals from which to select for things like gutter cleaning and tankless water heater installation.

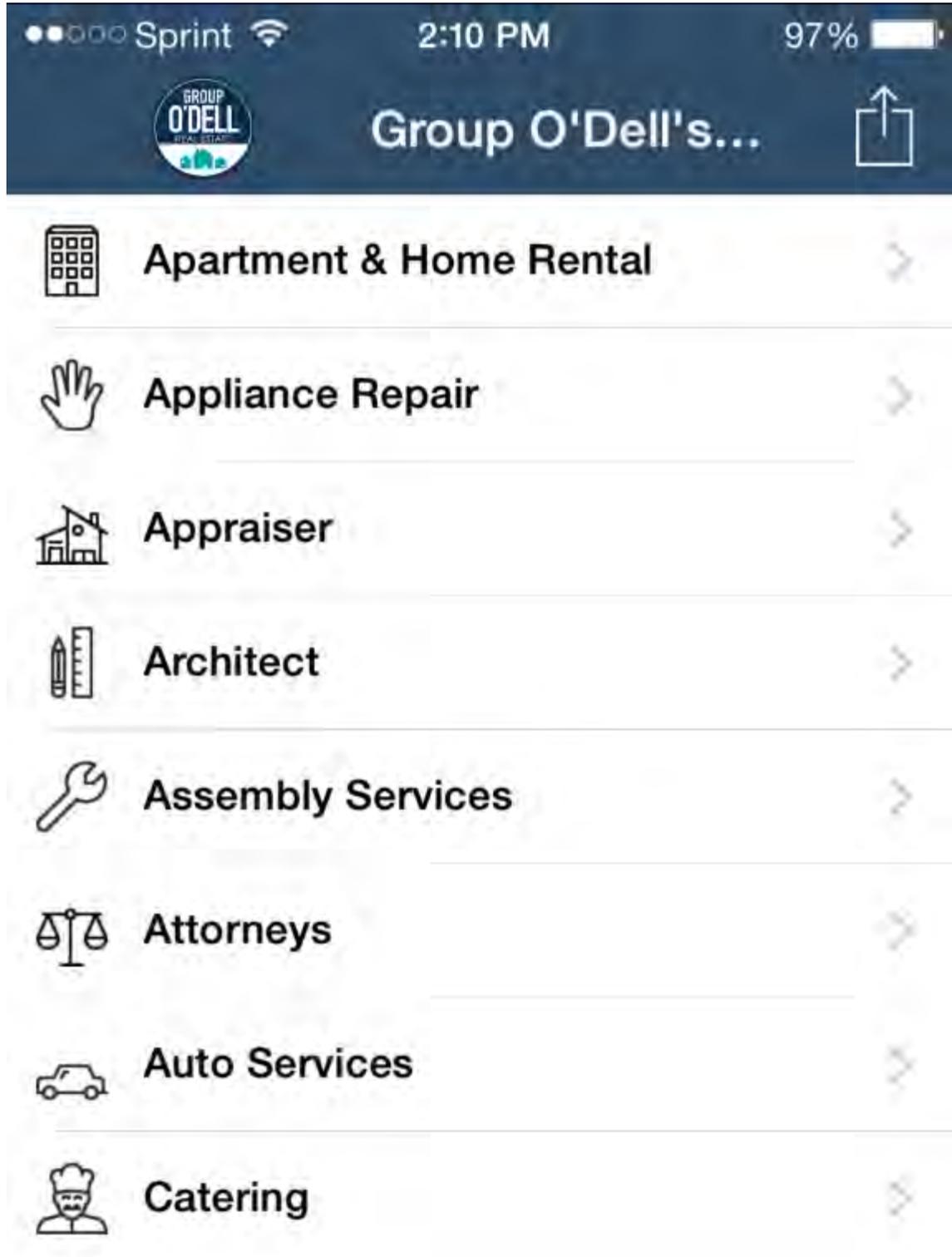


Maybe Dizzle is an app best suited for first-time buyers, like the slow-to-commit millennials? Granted, these are people raised on Yelp. Their initial instinct is to see who the Internet recommends to install new countertops, and then argue with them. Unless YouTube helps them first.

Yes, millennials might be drawn to an agent with an app. Dizzle agents need to hope Trulia or Redfin hasn't beat them to it, though.

I also wonder about how many home screen swipes it will take to find your app after a few months. Or after a phone upgrade or operating system update.

My fear is that if the house is in order for a number of months, outside of minor dents and dings, your face and logo could end up on the fourth or fifth screen, maybe somewhere between Duolingo (some day you'll commit to that new language) and the outdated trial version of a constellation map.





Chimney Services



Cleaning



Group O'Dell's List



Updates



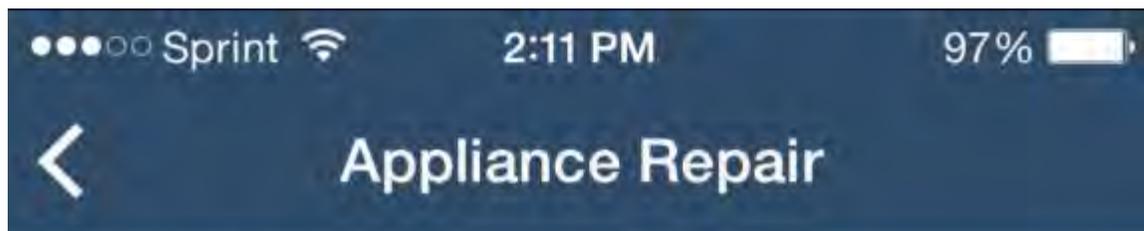
Group O'Dell

There are features to Dizzle that could be of some use, like its push notification tool, which can send news and talking points to your entire contact list via text or email. “Share my new listing with your friends!”

This hinges on just how interested a customer is in notifications from their agent even a few weeks after closing.

It also depends on how tedious we allow our smartphone notification tirades to become. I know I can't shut mine off fast enough, like playing Whack-A-Mole. I tend to ignore them out of spite.

If an agent can arrange discounts for customers with preferred vendors, or even leverage their market notoriety into paid advertising from said vendors, then a Dizzle app becomes significantly more valuable.



Mike Reliford

All About Appliance Repair

Repair most general home appliances throughout the KC metro area.



Call



Add



John Smith

Appliance Doctor

Appliance repair throughout the
KC metro area.



Call



Add



Group O'Dell's List



Updates



Group O'Dell

If you're already disciplined about staying in touch with customers through traditional means, like e-newsletters and maybe a phone call every six months, consider Dizzle a nice accoutrement to your overall outreach effort. It's certainly priced right for such a use.

I see tremendous value in this app for agents who do a lot of relocation or vacation-home work. A great case for this is a would-be resident using the vendor partners to start setting up relationships a month before getting to town. Nice.

The close

All that being said, Dizzle has potential. I just don't see a lot of added value right now.

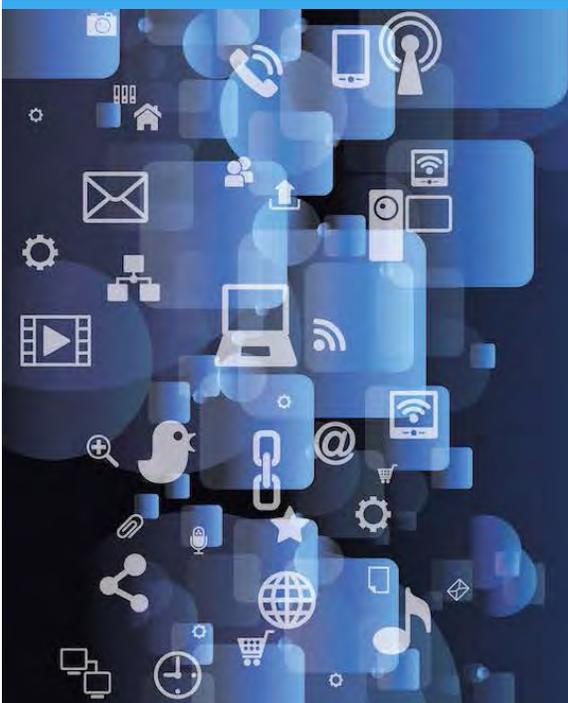
I could envision scaled pricing models as the company flushes out better ways for agents to see a return on it. Maybe Dizzle builds an array of a la carte bolt-ons to offer true customization, not just a different paint scheme and some pinstriping. I was told features like click-through metrics of sent links and other analytic tools are in the works.

The app is less than a year old and has 6,000 downloads. That's only OK. Plus, when you think about how much money an app of your own design takes to unleash, not to mention the cost of dealing with the economic politics of getting listed on the Apple and Android marketplaces, \$30 per month is a fair price to pay ... to say you have an app.

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Do you use Dizzle? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

OBEO

TECHNOLOGY

Obeo's marketing tools put tactics in front of strategy

Content looks good, but is it worth the price tag?



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 24, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)

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The pitch

Marketing is hard.

It's also expensive.

But if you avoid something because it's hard and expensive, then is it safe to say you prefer things cheap and easy?

I'm no Mark Cuban, but I'd wager those are two words that, when juxtaposed, don't describe sound business philosophy.

In my research and dealings over the years in the world of real estate, I've come across no shortage of marketing platforms, tools, website, apps, resources, plug-ins and services designed to make marketing easier for agents.

Here's the thing: The vast majority of those products, including what I review in this space, address tactics before strategy. There's a significant difference.

Keep this in mind when reading about [Obeo](#), a robust marketing content creator for real estate agents.

The sale

Obeo has categorized its tools for agents and brokers; this review focuses on Obeo for individual agents.

In short, Obeo offers an array of marketing tools for your listings. Some of the features are included; the more advanced "Smart Content" you pay for as you go. (It's not very clear.) Your subscription comes with a responsive property website, mobile text codes for interested buyers to get quick information sent to them, property brochures (print and electronic), and social media promotion of your listings.

Obeo connects to your local MLS or ListHub feed to find the content for your listing. This is the raw material from which your marketing tools are built. If desired, you can log in to adjust what images are presented where or which images should be highlighted.

Print a brochure of this property.

Click on the brochure to open a printable version

X



Instructions

Close this Window

What stands out to me is the automatic listing activity recaps sent to your clients. Obeo scrapes your Web traffic, plugs it into an email template you've already created, and shoots it off to your stakeholders. Useful.

My only bit of concern here is that you better be ready to explain why all that Web traffic may not be translating into showings. That's not really an Obeo issue, that's a marketing one; because in this, inevitability, we discover another example of how the strategic facets of marketing a home are neglected for the more compelling, easy-to-measure tactical end.



It's easy to tell a client, "Hey, look at all this collateral we've put together."

It's hard to tell them about the relationship between list price and foot traffic. All the virtual tours in the world aren't going to sell a poorly positioned house.

I'm also somewhat cautious about the SEO (search engine optimization) aspect of your Obeo subscription. Keywording is quickly falling out of favor with search engines, and if you overdo it, you get penalized. Plus, considering how many typos I found on Obeo's own website, I'd be nervous about them building out my searchable copy. True SEO marketing today is about contextual, relevant copy and content that is visited often and recommended as expert subject matter.

More Details

TourId: **942047**
MLS Number: **1464934**
Price: **\$525,000**
Property Type: **Residential Home**
Address: **3996 ROYAL SCOTS AVE**
City: **Las Vegas**
State/Province: **NV**
Zip/Postal Code: **89141**
County: **Clark**
Country: **US**
TaxId: **177-31-711-063**
Taxes: **\$3,788**
Zoning: **RESIDENTIAL**
Home Owners Association: **ROYAL HIGHLANDS**
Schools: **STUC,TARK, DESO**
Bedrooms: **5**
Bathrooms: **4**



AN ELEGANT TURN-KEY HOME FEATURING A HIGHLY DESIRABLE LAYOUT THAT SHOWCASES OPEN FLOOR PLAN WITH EXPANSIVE DOWNSTAIRS MASTER BEDROOM & BATH; FRESH TWO TONE PAINT AND CUSTOM FAUX PAINT; CUSTOM PLANTATION SHUTTERS; BASEMENT WITH MEDIA/GAME ROOM; 5 BEDROOMS AND 3.5 BATHS; CUSTOM WROUGHT IRON WOOD RAILING STAIRCASE; CROWN MOULDING THROUGH OUT; CHEFS KITCHEN WITH GRANITE COUNTER-TOPS; ISLAND BAR & STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES; THE IMPRESSIVE BACKYARD FEATURES A SPACIOUS POOL/SPA/GAZEBO AND MUCH MORE!!

[Print Brochure](#)

I'm fascinated by some of Obeo's pay-extra Smart Content. They offer virtual staging of an empty house, which inserts furniture and lamps and place settings into your interior photographs like a digital Raymour & Flanigan.

But what happens when a buyer shows up and sees the actual, unstaged empty space? Even if full Photoshop disclosure is made, is that really effective? Isn't staging designed to invoked in-person, on-site reactions? Why not just hand them an issue of Architectural Digest before walking in the door?

\$2,199,999



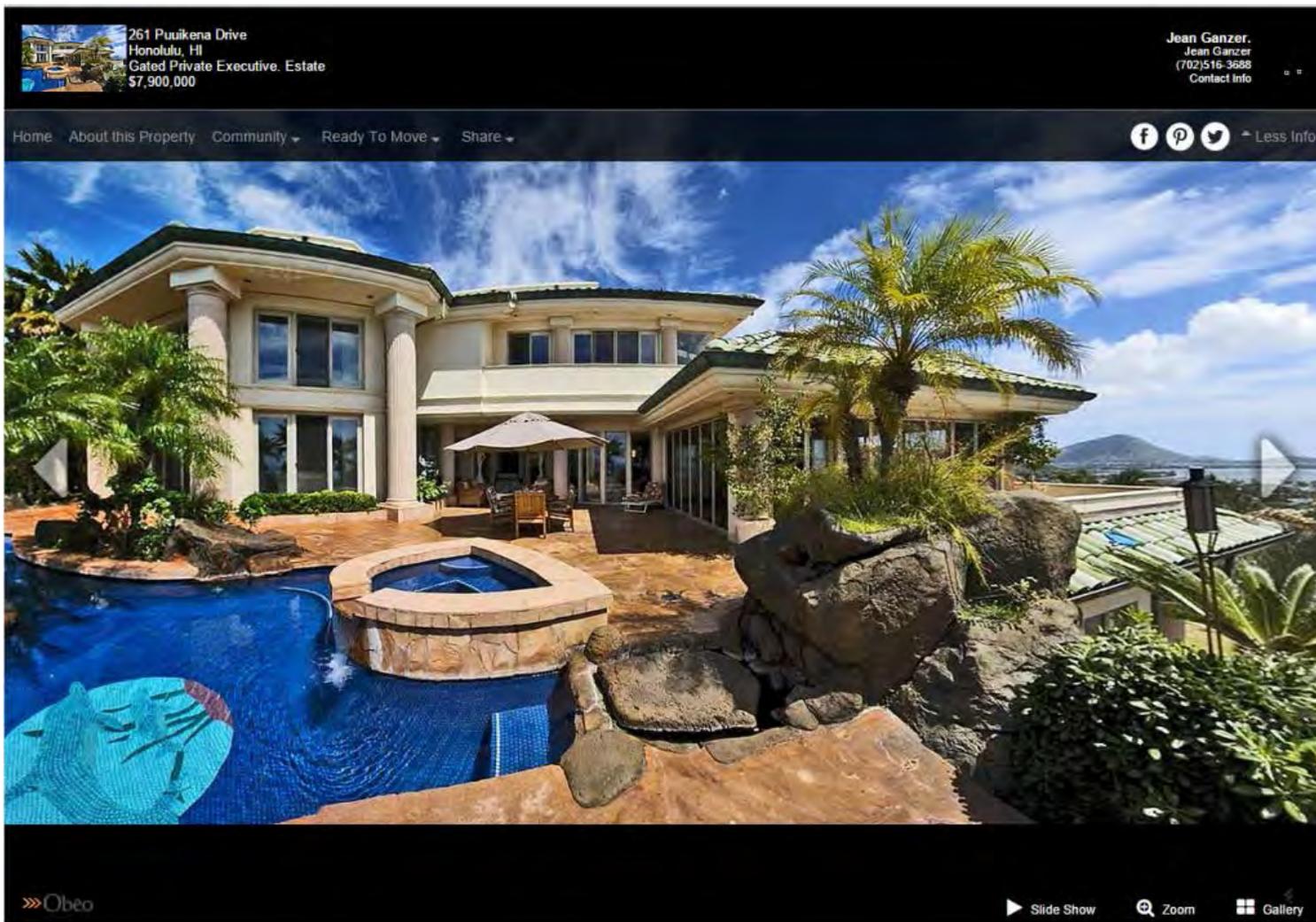
BEAUTIFUL HIGHLY UPGRADED CONTEMPORARY STYLE UNIT. EVERY ATTENTION T

CONTEMPORARY STYLE, OPEN FLOOR PLAN, NEUTRAL COLORS, BARELY BEGIN TO DESCRIBE THIS HIGHLY UPGRADED UNIT. UNIT 801 IS IMMACULATELY DETAILED. VIEW OF STRIP, CITY, AND MOUNTAINS. THE DEN COULD EASILY BE A 3RD BEDROOM. LOCATED AT THE PRESTIGIOUS PARK TOWERS. ONLY RESIDENTIAL HIGH-RISE LOCATED IN THE HOWARD HUGHES BUSINESS CENTER. EXCELLENT SECURITY. MINUTES FROM AIRPORT AND STRIP. PARK TOWERS IS A BOUTIQUE BUILDING WITH ONLY 84 CUSTOM UNITS. BUILT BY IRWIN MOLASKY AND STEVE WYNN



Having an HD video of a listing is definitely useful. “Video” is used a bit liberally, though. They’re not sending out a crew with Steadicams and green screens. Rather, it’s a nicely assembled collection of photos and home features with transitions and some graphic overlays. This is good to have in your marketing mix, but it’s nothing totally original from a content standpoint. And don’t get enamored by the “HD” in “HD video.” You have HD video on your phone.

They can also edit your home shots to look as if you took them during the “Golden Hour.” In photography, this refers to the few minutes of perfect natural light at dawn or dusk. For your premier listings, I can see some value here. However, if you connect to a local professional photographer through Obeo’s network, you can hire a shooter who will negate the need for that level of touch-up.



The close

To get ramped up with Obeo's EasyEdge, it'll cost you \$99 in setup and then \$49.99 per month. There's more money to pay for the interactive floor plans, unique address domains and various forms of photographic chicanery.

Here's the deal: There's no doubt Obeo can make you look like a sophisticated real estate marketing machine. The content looks good and will impress clients. My opinion is that it's a tool for agents who sell luxury property and who work with clients who misinterpret flash for substance.

That's not because I think it costs too much. In fact, I think it's quite cheap.

And very easy.

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

PLACESTER

TECHNOLOGY

Placester makes you think about the Web presence it helps you build

Make a compelling website something you do, not something you 'should have'



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 25, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

If you depend on someone's office assistant for website content updates or a companywide help queue to update a listing, you're doing it wrong.

There are just way too many tools and resources out there among the Interwebs for you to be relying on the website your brokerage provides you. Look, I'm all about hiring professionals to assist in copy and content management, but you need to have full access, as well as a finger always on the pulse of that stream of ones and zeros.

Marketing needs to be an investment in self as much as an investment in business. I feel very strongly about agents having their own websites and a proactive Web presence, and I think that they should be able to know how to manage both.

This is why I like [Placester](#). They provide the tools and technical infrastructure, but it's up to you to paint over the numbers. It's Socratic Web development, if you will. Nothing is overly automated. You have to think ... wait for it ... strategically about your page hierarchy, content models and conversion tactics.

Let's check it out.

The sale

Marketing shouldn't be overly automated.

When too much happens without your involvement, you become unattached to the outcome. You can't micromanage, either, because that leads to being shortsighted and reactionary.

Placester helps you build a compelling, contemporary website, then backs away, leaving you to run things.



Sites Marketing Leads Listings Account Agents

Sites +

	My Real Estate Site ▼ Listings: 32,228 ▲ Posts: 4	View Live Site View Details View Sitemap Disable ▲ Pages: 12 ▲ Leads: 10
	Second Site ▼ Listings: 0 ▲ Posts: 4	View Preview View Details Launch Site Delete ▲ Pages: 7 ▲ Leads: 0
	Third Site ▼ Listings: 0 ▲ Posts: 4	View Preview View Details Launch Site Delete ▲ Pages: 7 ▲ Leads: 0

Powered by Placester

They'll forward a domain you already own or help you register a new one. I strongly encourage you to forward or buy a new one if you don't already own one; the standard Placester domain is really clunky.

You can choose from a solid array of site models, all of them responsive and receptive to your IDX (Internet data exchange) feeds. They have relationships with almost 100 MLS (multiple listing service) locations.

get in touch
512-910-8990

Email Me

Stay connected:



sign in

Log in

Register

Gateway to the Texas Hill Country

Back
Forward
Reload
Save As...
Print...
Translate to English
View Page Source
View Page Info

Evernote Web Clipper
OneTab

Inspect Element

SEARCH FOR REAL ESTATE

Neighborhood

City

Zip code

Max Price



When your listing page is assembled, you can also control how site visitors search for them. Maps are plugged in, and so are social media share tools.

Placester understands how content plays a role in online marketing, because it also offers an extensive catalog of free resources on the subject. With a billion people on the Internet every day, the data absorbed about how to reach them is flowing by the second. Find a way to irrigate your knowledge base with as much of it as you can.



Featured Listings

About

10 Brimmer St Boston MA



11 Phillips St Boston MA



Jane Stevens

Phone

[800 555 1212](tel:8005551212)

[Email Me](#)

Along those lines, Placester offers a good deal of flexibility in lead capture, too. You can build forms, ask questions and offer newsletters.

One warning: If given the option in Placester to block your website's listing pages with a contact submission prompt, don't.

Don't entice me with information about a house I'd be compelled to visit, then demand I give you my email address in order to see it. This is a bully tactic, and it turns off users. Instead, give visitors to your site a good reason to trust you via free content and sound market information.

Placester sites come ready for agent rosters, testimonials and blogs, which are great tools for offering market knowledge, reports, company videos and promoting events.

Location Map



Sort By

Price



Descending



Save Search

Show

10



36 Photos

**1857 White Mountain Highway
Conway, New Hampshire 03860**

MLS# 4334322

\$2,600,000

Listing Agent: Steven Steiner
Courtesy of: Select Real Estate



3 Photos

**784-786 West Main Street Littleton,
New Hampshire 03561**

MLS# 4098125

\$2,500,000

Listing Agent: Andy Smith
Courtesy of: Peabody and Smith Realty



When your site is up and ready to roll, Placester piles on the pitch for a number of bolt-on Web marketing efforts, like Google AdWords, SEO (search engine optimization), Facebook ads, and even some CRM (customer relationship manager) integration. Granted, it's the upsell you were probably expecting, but it's not nefarious; those are proven methods to build traffic.

The close

Placester offers the right tools and the proper balance of agent accountability to make for an excellent Web marketing solution. The \$10 per month fee also includes hosting.

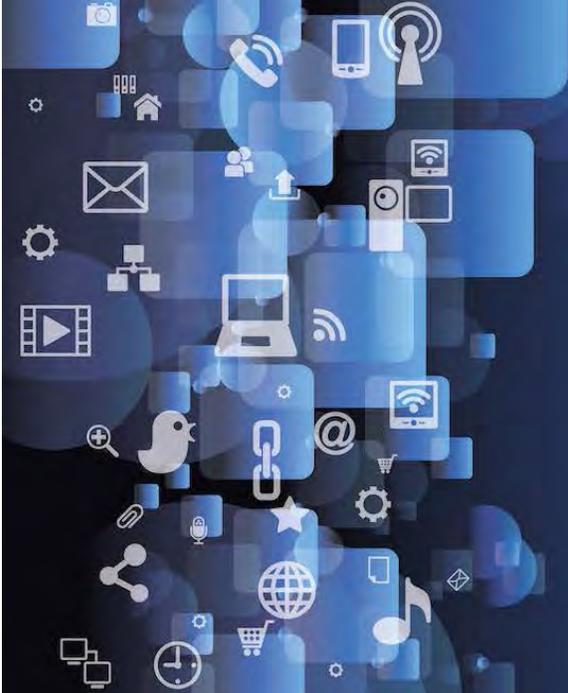
Again, you need to put in the time to make it work. Stop thinking a compelling website is just something you "should have."

Instead, make it something you do.

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Do you use Placester? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

GOOGLE SEARCH ALGORITHM

TECHNOLOGY

Google's latest algorithm change will favor mobile-friendly sites, so make sure yours is ready

What do you need to do to maintain or move up in the search engine's rankings?



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 26, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)

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The pitch

Just when you thought your website was ready to win at the local rankings race, here comes Google to add another hairpin to the course.

This time, it's all about mobile optimization and this simple fact: More than 60 percent of all Google searches originate on mobile devices.

On April 21, Google is going to roll out a major update to its ranking algorithm that will greatly increase the importance of mobile functionality. Is your site ready?

The sale

You've seen the word "responsive" used to describe websites. But don't get fooled into thinking that term blankets the checklist of items your site needs to be considered "mobile-ready." At least in the eyes of the Internet search kingmaker that matters: Google.

The new update, while still under a quilt of secrecy that only Google can knit, is considered by some to be as extensive as its last two major algorithmic overhauls, the latter of which significantly reduced search dependency on keywords.

(You also should know that mobile optimization also impacts searches performed on desktop browsers.)

Think for a moment about the very nature of mobile Web browsing. For starters, if you're on the go, you are likely searching for information pertaining to the reason you're on the go, so if that data is slow to load, too small to read or misplaced on the page, your customers are going to the next search result.



However, Google reports that the majority of mobile device searching occurs in a home that owns a desktop (or laptop). This means that mobile-friendliness may very well become the single most critical item on the “why we need a new website” list.

So what can you do to make the appropriate changes on your site? First, if you’re using a WordPress/Wix/Squarespace theme that isn’t optimized for mobile, consider upgrading or ensuring you have the latest version of your theme.

If you’re still relegating your Web presence to whatever the brokerage provides you, please reconsider. Or at least be sure that the group handling the site is prepared for the Google revamp.



Look for more than just a site that's responsive, which just means all of your content resizes to fit within mobile browser parameters. Responsive Web design is critical, but it doesn't necessarily adjust the content to fit the browsing patterns or needs of mobile users. So make changes on your site to accommodate those users.

Make sure the mobile version of your site puts the most accessed content upfront. Any decent Web metrics tool will show you user habits. If the majority of visitors come to your site for your clever blog posts, put that first. If it's for your latest listings, make that content prominent.

Then, [use this simple mobile-friendliness test](#) on Google. This can help you understand the basics of how mobile browsers and Google itself will view your content. I plugged in Inman.com, and since we're all about transparency here, I'm happy to share the results were ...

Mobile-Friendly Test

[ANALYZE](#)

Awesome! This page is mobile-friendly.

Anyway, this a good starting point from which to consider making changes.

The close

The search result game is growing ever more complicated, and making it more challenging for small real estate brands to compete against listing hubs with tens of thousands of pages brimming with relatable content. Nevertheless, these Google updates matter, and you should make sure your Web vendors are aware of them. (You'd be surprised.)

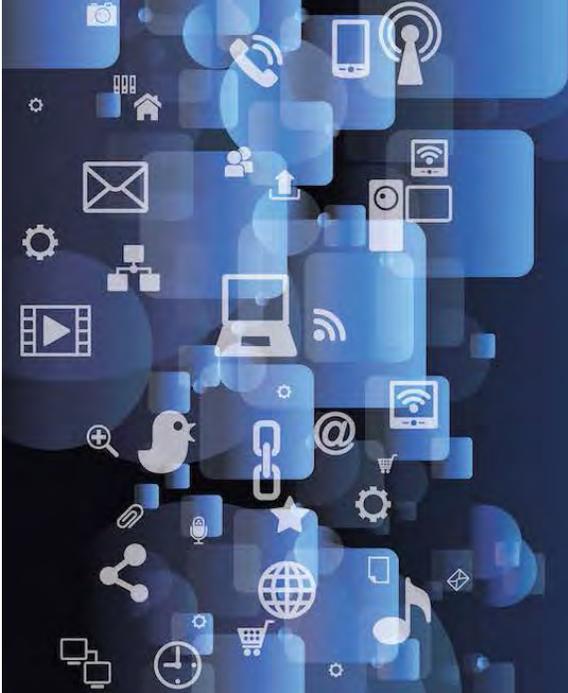
That means your best chance to make the most of your Web presence is to give every visitor you do get a reason to contact you. Strong content. Engaging market information. Mobile-friendliness.

You don't have to win the global search game, but there are plenty of efforts you can make to always be a local competitor. Because it's all about being local.

Get a full week's worth of real estate tech reviews delivered straight to your inbox!

Are you going to change anything due to Google's algorithm shifts? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

HOMEZADA

TECHNOLOGY

HomeZada is a powerful tool for homeowners — and may help agents, too

Help clients keep track of updates and renovations while you keep in touch



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 27, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Most real estate agents would prefer to work with sellers over buyers.

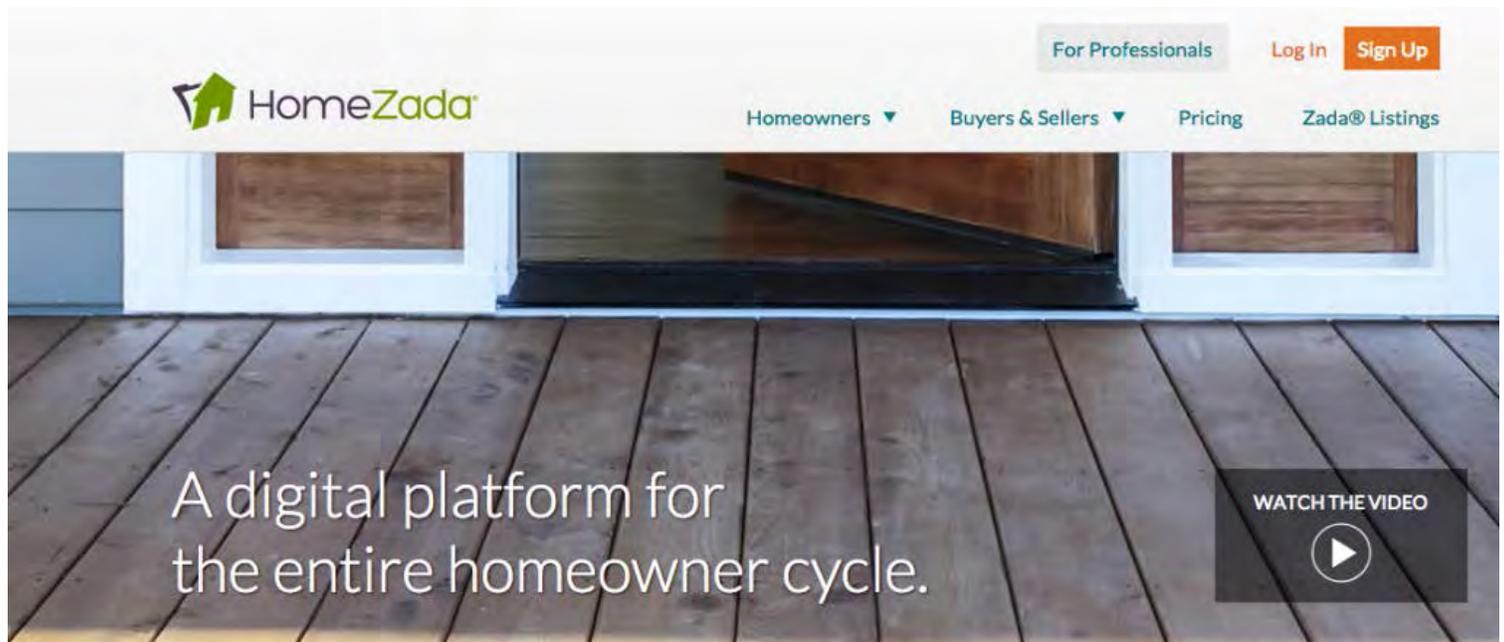
Buyers ask you to find brick ranches and end up closing on a four-story modernist. And no one can remember how they ended up there, which is probably for the best.

Still, buyers do stand a chance of becoming sellers. So sometimes it's worth keeping in touch. [HomeZada](#) aims to help you do that while helping homeowners do everything else.

The sale

HomeZada is software that helps homeowners track any sort of home maintenance activity, from room additions to repairing a faucet. The software is nothing if not comprehensive.

You can record new appliance installations with costs and model numbers; create calendars with embedded alerts for seasonal maintenance tasks; and keep a list of contractor names and email addresses. Plus, HomeZada includes common checklists for major home systems, and you can categorize by season, task or date.



In short, those who manage household budgets and upkeep tasks at this granular a level will really dig HomeZada.

But how does the agent benefit?

The pitch from HomeZada is that the buyer's agent can "gift" a HomeZada account to your buyer after closing so that the agent's contact information is prominently displayed on their dashboard each time they log in. However, if the homeowner already has a HomeZada account when they buy the house, no agent branding will be displayed. (Use that gift for

another client.)

As a listing agent with a HomeZada account, you create a “new property” and load it with as much information as possible about your client’s home. This may include floor plans, HOA covenants, lot maps, videos and whatever due diligence may help catalyze the sale.

About the Dining Room

The dining room can accommodate a rectangular or round table. It is great for entertaining as a rectangular table can extend into the living room for large dinners, and it is located right across the hallway to the kitchen.

Location: House | Dimensions: 15 x 17 | Color: Sun Stone KM 5277 Kelly Moore

◀ Previous Room

Next Room ▶

Features ⁱ



Chandelier

A great looking chandelier with a few accent colored crystals

Upon closing, the listing agent can then “transfer” it to the new owner, inviting them into HomeZada as a consumer. Should the buyer accept and use it as intended, you look like a rock star to someone who wasn’t your client.

If your only goal is to (hopefully) secure the listing in a few years, I have my doubts that HomeZada alone will be the reason they call you. You need to still be active outside the confines of the software, so don’t ditch your CRM (customer relationship manager) for HomeZada.

Rooms & Spaces ¹



Living Room

18 x 18



Dining Room

15 x 17



Family Room

18 x 25



Kitchen

20 x 25



Nook

10 x 10



Foyer

8 x 10

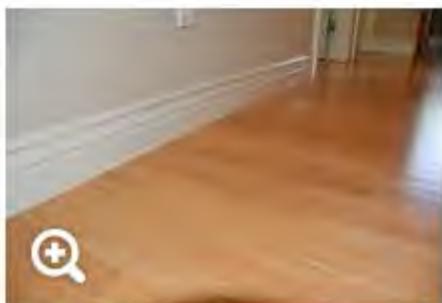
HomeZada's Zada Listing is a nice feature that may help you sell a home below the average number of days on market. Essentially, for \$75 above your \$59 annual cost, you can build a listing presentation that nicely includes every bit of maintenance history the seller added to the system over the years. All the pictures, paint schemes and plant types. Agents can publish their Zada Listing to multiple social media accounts, email lists or what have you.

A **Zada Listing** gives a buyer more data than they'll see on just about any other listing resource.

◀ Previous Project

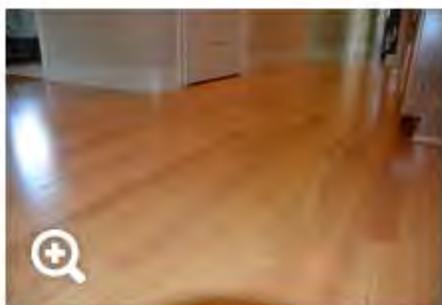
Next Project ▶

🏠 Items Purchased ⓘ



Base Boards

American Beadboard | WD-90345
4 1/2 inch solid wood baseboard



Flooring

Bruce
Maple hardwood floors

Additional Information:

[bruce-hardwood-floor-warranty.pdf](#)

For example, buyers may not think to ask for the type of wood used in the crown molding, but if given to them, it suddenly becomes another selling point they can latch on to.

“Oh, honey, look, they used reclaimed oak in the molding. And the half-bath vanity is only 2 years old!”

The close

If you can sell your buyer client on the benefits of using HomeZada after closing, you may be in really good shape when it comes time for them to sell. The software is very well done.

Not to be overlooked for the homeowner is the value of tracking their home’s contents for insurance purposes. This is also another selling point for the agent.

At \$59 per year, I don’t think it costs too much for the Premium version. At the very least, a HomeZada account makes for a unique closing present, much better than a gift card to Bed

Bath & Beyond.

But wine never hurts.

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Do you use HomeZada? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

EZFLIX

TECHNOLOGY

Video production app Ezflix makes listing videos quick and dynamic

Aptly named tool will help agents create compelling video content



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 30, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

YouTube is an Internet giant.

What started as a time-killer for laughing at kids drugged on dental anesthetics is now a

globally influential platform for everything from emerging bluegrass artists to cooking shows about science fiction-themed baked goods.

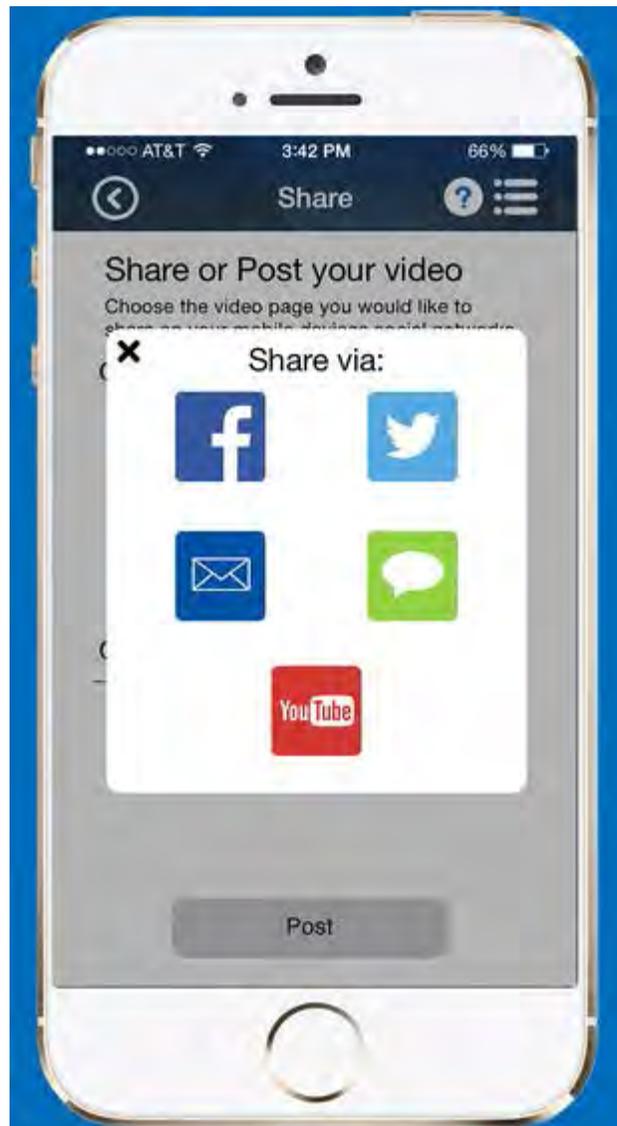
Real estate agents should be all over it. And maybe **Ezflix** can help you get there.

The sale

I've worked in television studios and on small film sets; all I can do is shake my head when I see what apps like Ezflix are allowing us to do.

The evolution of computing power has taken high-definition video rendering out of the hands of \$300-per-hour studio editors and put it into your shirt pocket.

I'm not saying the easy editing tools and MLS listing feed connectivity of Ezflix will give you Wes Anderson's eye for frame composition, but it certainly lends you the technical capabilities to construct, narrate and publish good-looking real estate marketing videos.

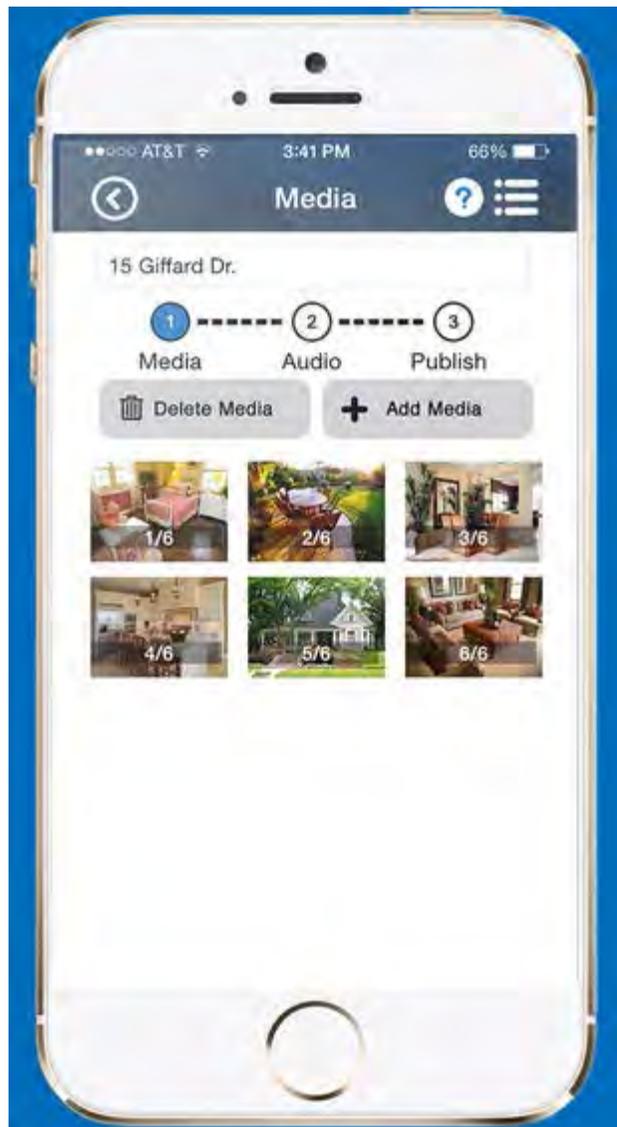


If you're not comfortable with editing, Ezflix automatically pulls images from your MLS listing feed and assembles them into simple slideshows. Frankly, I see this type of content as less video and more PowerPoint. However, to that end, these are pretty effective. They come loaded with a voice-over, compiled by an array of actual (not robotic) recording services. Nice.

I like that once your feed is connected, the app presents each of your listings in its interface, so a reminder to market them is right in front of you.

You can add media with your phone's camera beyond what's in your MLS listing — useful if the client has made changes since your initial visit.

As the folks behind Ezflix suggest, don't just use video to showcase the home, grab content of the surrounding community and edit in a few frames of what's going around the house. Editing is as easy as dragging into order the clips and photos you think are best. You can (and absolutely should) film personal intros or closings and save them as stock footage to use in multiple settings.



If you're comfortable with unmanned aerial vehicle footage, it could look great integrated into an Ezflix edit.

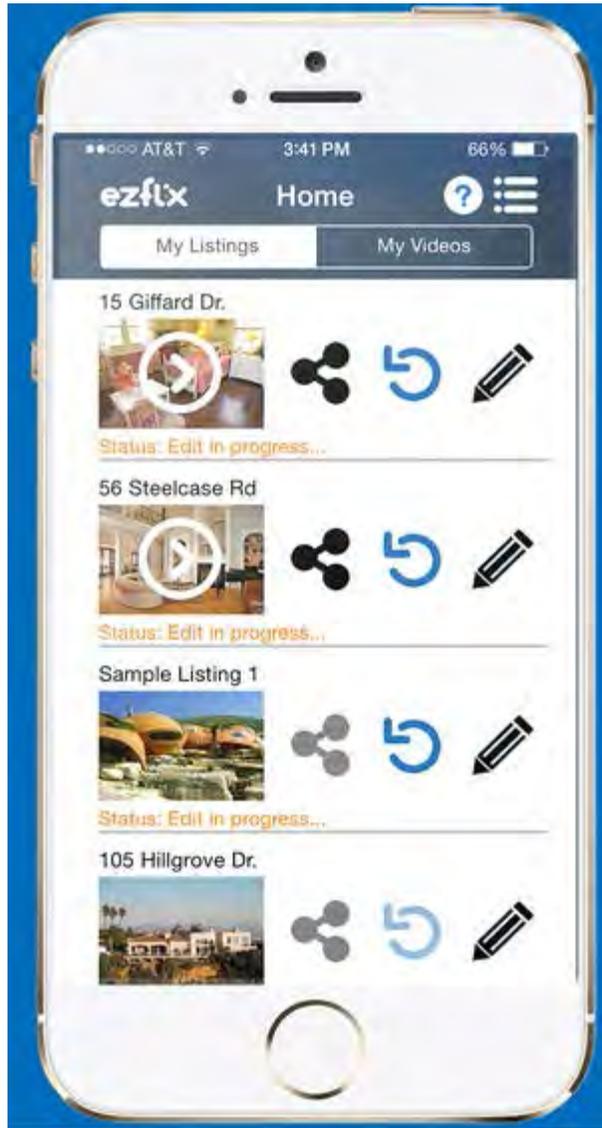
Storage is an obvious consideration when working with video content. Those megabytes accumulate quickly, so Ezflix lets you send those into the cloud once pulled into the software. You can also use the desktop browser version of your account, so you can access any video that's there as well and work on a larger screen.

Ezflix has a very nice array of stock soundtracks you can choose from. You can choose songs from your music library, too ... but you might want to avoid layering a Metallica riff over a shot of the master bedroom.

Timing narration to visuals can be hard for video neophytes. But Ezflix has your back. It plays your audio for as long as the image appears. You can choose to narrate individual photos in a video, or you can do a single track over the entire piece. Audio recorded in your stock video

footage remains intact, since its native to that file.

Voice-over quality still depends on your smartphone's microphone, so give some thought to your shooting times and location. Or, record it in your office closet.



Finished videos are shared to social media with a couple of taps, as well as to your YouTube account. It sends an IDX (Internet data exchange)-compliant version to the MLS, and it also allows for connectivity to the major listing sites.

When you complete a video, Ezflx takes a minute or two to assemble it before sending you a link. From there, you can get feedback from your clients — or, if you're that good, send it directly to the eager homebuying market.

The close

Could you make more dynamic videos with iMovie or another such professional-level editor?

Yes, of course. Ezflix is a basic video production tool, available for both iOS and Android operating systems. Best of all, it's tailored to the way agents work and takes a great deal of the complexities out of the process.

Ezflix is fast; its automatic MLS integration saves you photo import steps, and its ease of sharing is hard to beat. It also makes editing very simple. And through the desktop interface, you can quickly assemble print fliers and postcards, too. All included.

Free for now, future plans for Ezflix do call for tiered pricing levels, as well as on-screen graphics and features.

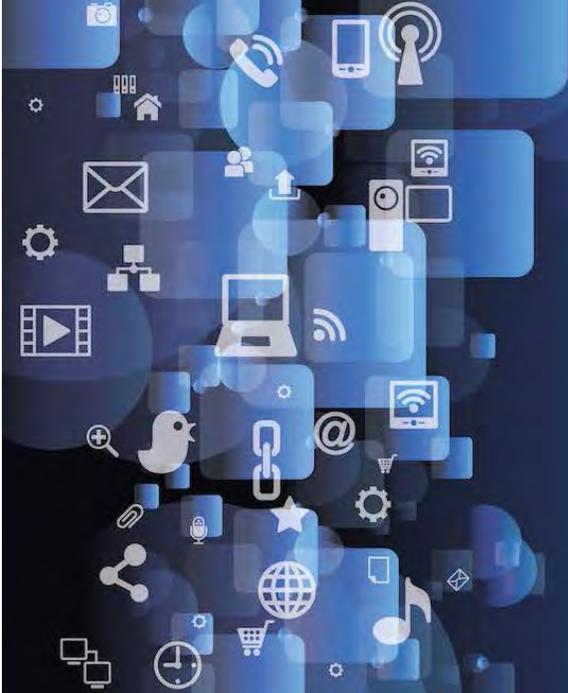
Again, you need to think about how to make a listing video effective: Have a plan and practice. There's a reason film directors do things like blocking and read-throughs, and plan for multiple takes.

Or, just wing it. If you do, please share the link. We'll want to see it on YouTube.

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Do you use Ezflix? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

REALTYJUGGLER

TECHNOLOGY

CRM RealtyJuggler lives up to its namesake

Product manages marketing, sales, transactions -- and customers



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Mar 31, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

A big part of finding the right real estate CRM (customer relationship manager) is making sure it's the right fit for your operation. Maybe the capability is outstanding, but it's too hard to

learn. Or maybe your team just isn't ready to commit to a uniform approach to managing their sales process.

RealtyJuggler is a CRM that is priced so aggressively I can't help but think it's at least worth a shot for any small team or agency that's been on the fence about investing in a CRM.

Shall we find out?

The sale

RealtyJuggler is straightforward about being a CRM for real estate agents. It doesn't attach itself to some higher purpose above that of helping you better manage customers and sales. I'm down. If that's what you do, it's that much easier for a user to hold your features accountable.

Each user will run you \$99 per year. The 90-day free trial is more than enough time for a team to know if it's what they need.



The screenshot displays the RealtyJuggler CRM interface for a contact named Abigail. At the top, there are navigation buttons: 'Return', 'Delete Contact', and 'Duplicate Contact'. Below these are utility icons for 'Help' and 'Print'. A left-hand sidebar lists various sections: 'General', 'Address (1)', 'Photo', 'Service Report', 'Mail', 'Mailing Label', 'Tasks (5)', 'Appointments', 'Backlinks', and 'Transfer'. The main content area shows contact information: 'Mobile Phone' with the number '(555) 434-6294 (Abigail)', an empty 'Home Phone' field, and a 'Categories' dropdown menu. Below this are several anniversary and birthday fields: 'B-Day' set to 'June 6', 'Anniversary' set to 'June 8', 'Child B-Day' set to 'Aug 5', and 'Closing Anniversary' set to 'July 8'. Each of these fields has a 'for:' text input box below it, with 'Sally (1999)' and '12 Main Street (2001)' entered respectively. At the bottom, there is another 'B-Day' field set to 'No Date' and a 'Google Drive Folder' field.

As far as CRM features go, RealtyJuggler is on pace with the much pricer end of the market. Users are offered drip campaigns that can be executed via email or ... wait for it ... actual paper letters. Allow me to digress:

I think the real estate industry can do significantly better in its effort to eschew paper-based transactions. It's kind of a shame, actually.

Nevertheless, the traditional marketer in me believes soundly that there is still a place for print in your media mix. (I have a marketing client who's been sending a printed quarterly

newsletter for 20-plus years, and it earns new business every time.)

A printed, hand-signed personal letter? Even better.



The screenshot displays the RealtyJuggler CRM interface for a contact record. At the top, there are icons for Help and Print, followed by buttons for Done, Delete Contact, and Duplicate Contact. A left-hand navigation menu includes options for General, Address (1), Photo, Service Report, Mail, Mailing Label, Tasks (highlighted with a mouse cursor), Appointments, Backlinks, and Transfer. The main content area shows fields for Children, Referred By (with a dropdown arrow and a Map link), Last Contact (yesterday), Contact every (5 days), Notes (with a dropdown arrow and a blue arrow icon), Custom1, and Custom2.

RealtyJuggler has a ton of letter templates to choose from, many emanating from the [Dave Beson LetterWriter](#) program. They're going to need some editing touches (way too many exclamation points for my taste), but the framework is there, so just apply your curb appeal. Or write your own and save those.

Also standing out in the RealtyJuggler lineup of features is its online feedback form for open houses. Share the link with your visitors and the comments stream directly into the related listing. There's no better way to adjust your seller's mindset about their listing than to show them direct market feedback.

As its name does not subtly imply, RealtyJuggler manages a bunch of items related to marketing, sales and transactions. Remember, there's getting the business and then there's doing the business, so the integration of all three branches of the real estate sales cycle is critical. If you want to get the most out of a CRM, you have to value every bit of data that streams across your browser.

I'm not in love with the interface. The icons are dated, and some of the processes are clinical. It's not overly engaging. However, it is practical and task-oriented. Again, RealtyJuggler is about being a CRM; it clearly invests its programming hours in functionality. And users should be happy about that.



You'd be hard-pressed to find a contact source that RealtyJuggler won't talk to when it comes time to transport customer data from other sources, even Gmail. Its YouTube library of support and training resources is superb.

RealtyJuggler is also mobile on both iOS and Android, a nice value-add. You can create marketing fliers, track office expenses and connect website leads. All the basics are there.

The close

RealtyJuggler was developed by real estate agents, a factor that should not be overlooked when considering how it overlaps with your efforts. When I buy a piece of climbing gear, I want to know if it was built by a company started by rock climbers, or a sporting goods brand wanting a part of the climbing market.

I also like RealtyJuggler's ongoing evolution. It continues to add features and find different ways to help its users. Like all CRMs, you don't need every facet of it, but there's more than enough here for you to be better at the things you're already doing.

Smaller independent teams and individual agents looking to exact change in the way they compete for market business should give RealtyJuggler its 90-day trial.

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Do you use RealtyJuggler? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

MAILCHIMP

TECHNOLOGY

MailChimp is an easy, fun way to build brand and sales with email

Intelligent email marketing with a top product



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 1, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

If you do any marketing at all, email needs to be a part of it.

Despite what you may have heard or think you heard, email marketing is far from dead. In fact,

it's become a must for consumer brands. Turns out a well-written subject line is one of industry's best sales tools, whether selling off road tires or smart watches.

Email is also great for general branding, like making company announcements, introducing new employees or sharing a behind-the-scenes video. It's also one of the most efficient dollar-per-customer marketing tools of any media mix.

That being said, have you heard of [MailChimp](#)?

The sale

On top of having the cutest company icon on the Internet, MailChimp is one of its most popular email marketing tools. It's the second organic return on Google below news when you enter "email marketing."

Upon login, users are presented with the stats from a recent campaign, or email. You have all the message's basics, like when it was sent and to how many people. There are nice bar graphs and a click-thru rate report.

When you establish an account, MailChimp asks you about your industry. This is so that when you send a message, they can share with you the real estate industry's average open and click-thru rates.

Subject: Fewer headaches, fewer hassles. More sales.



[View Report](#)

Your dashboard also very clearly summarizes your last five campaigns. Use this to measure what subject lines worked and what message had the most impact. Audience measurement has long been one of email marketing's highest and best uses.

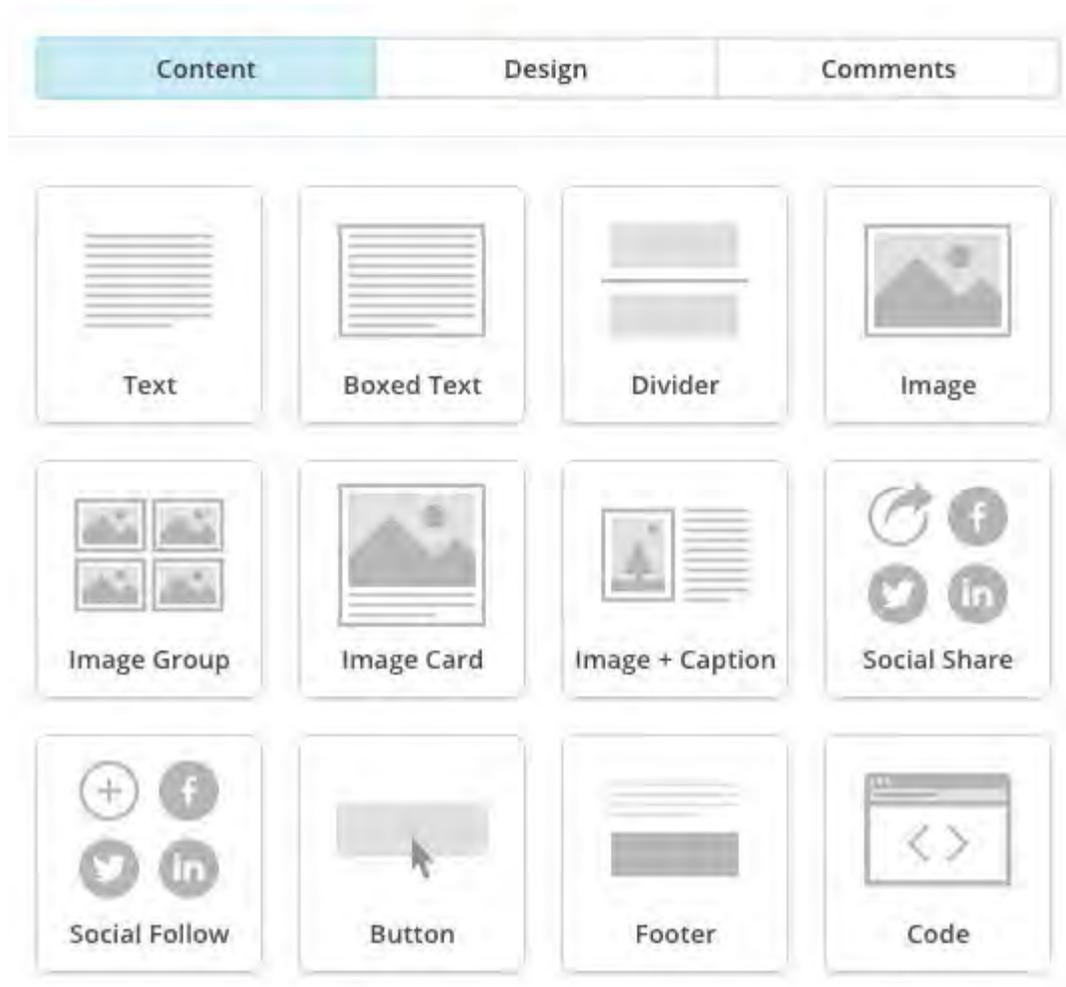
We can now meter exactly what interests an audience, many of which volunteered their inboxes for you to sell them a property or critical brand message. Email marketing is much more powerful than most realize, and we neglect it as some sort of half-hearted part of our CRM's capabilities.

MailChimp makes email easier than [Constant Contact](#) and [Bronto](#). I've used all of them.

(However, Bronto is now much more than an email marketing tool. I was one of its very first users, circa 2002.)

I love MailChimp's simplified cousin, [TinyLetter](#). But it's much more about personal messaging than sales and marketing.

You can sort your last five campaigns according to campaign opens, clicks and specific clicked links. These easy-sort features offer a clean look at what listings in your newsletter may be earning the most interest. Maybe those clicks are the result of the pictures used, or maybe they're price- or ZIP code-driven. These are the valuable marketing data you can extract from just a few emails.

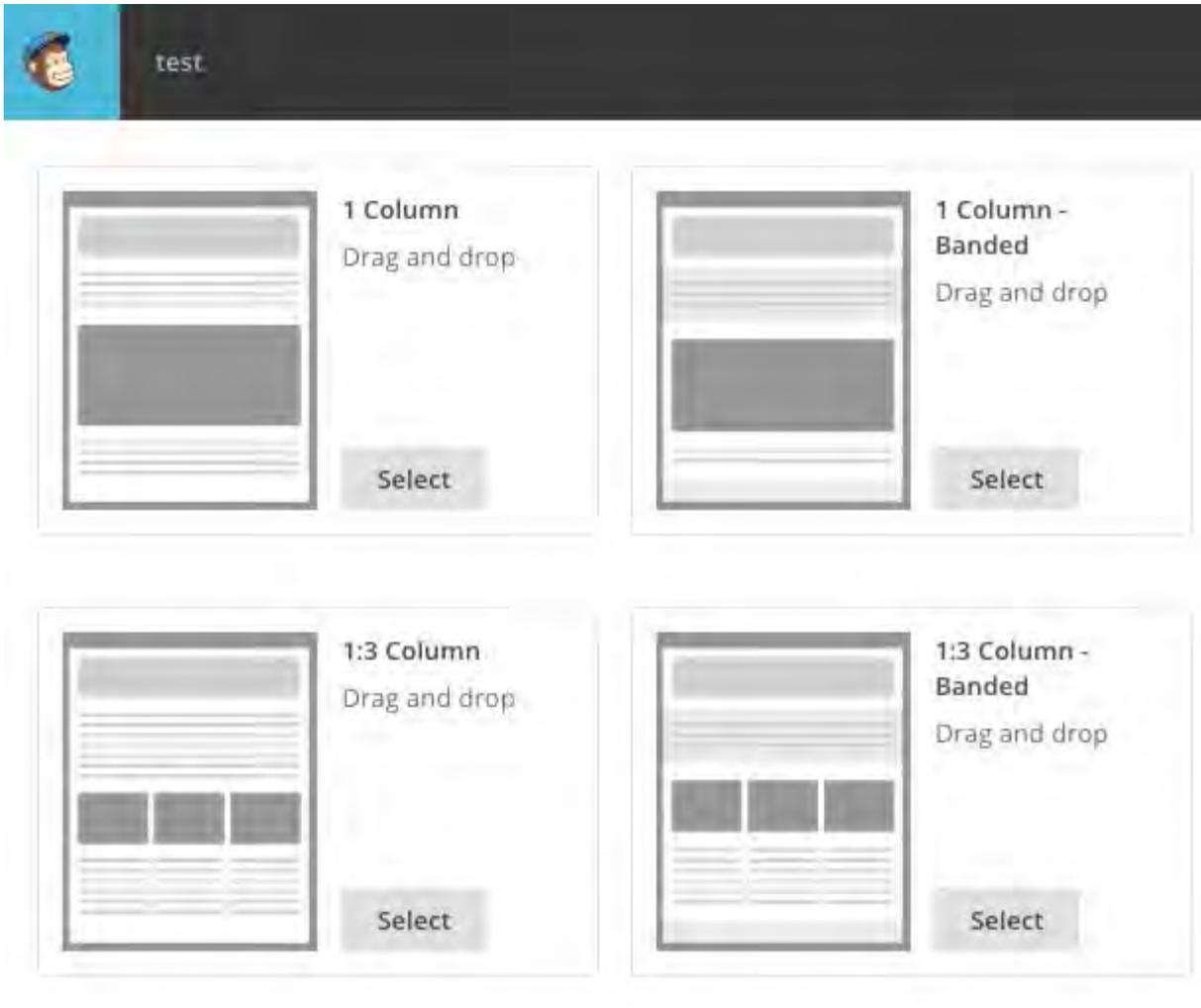


Building a campaign with MailChimp is as easy as logging in. You have several options. Send a simple text campaign, or add flair with HTML. You can blast a message to an RSS feed and also segment your message to separate lists, the latter sounding more complex than MailChimp makes it.

You have a number of templates from which to choose each time or you can select a saved

version. Creating messages is a drag-and-drop effort; text is easy to add, paste and edit. Pictures and links all flow easily into the user experience.

Multiple draft and send prompts make it almost impossible for you to send a message before it's ready. Still, make sure you always test a message.

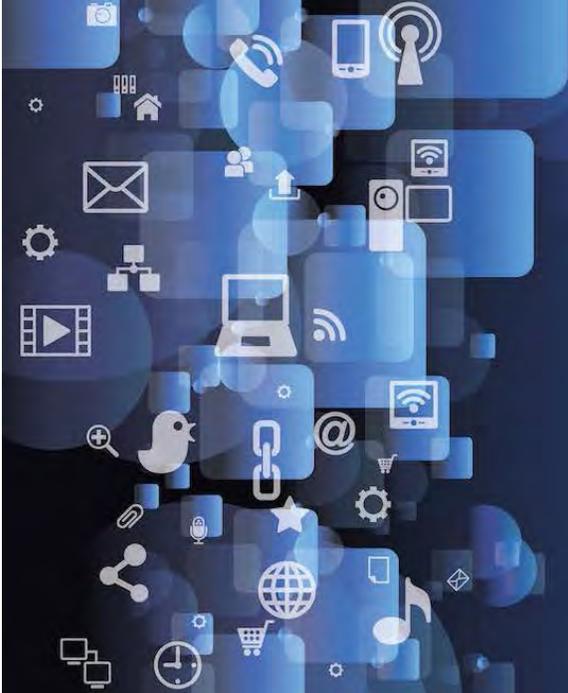


MailChimp is free, and that version's features are what I discussed here. A paid upgrade includes "goal tracking," a form of user radar that monitors movement on your site after message click-thrus.

The close

MailChimp is simple and fun to use. All aspects of user engagement are conversational, even the message that tells you about unsubscribers. (It happens.)

MailChimp has risen to the top of its tree for a reason. If you need to email and your CRM (customer relationship manager) isn't cutting it, this is probably your answer. In fact, even if you're happy with your CRM's email client, give this monkey's tail a tug.



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

EVERNOTE

TECHNOLOGY

Any size agent team can benefit from Evernote

Organize your virtual junk drawer with the productivity app



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 2, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

There are tons of apps for notes and checklists and to-dos. You could download a new one every day for a year and still be unorganized.

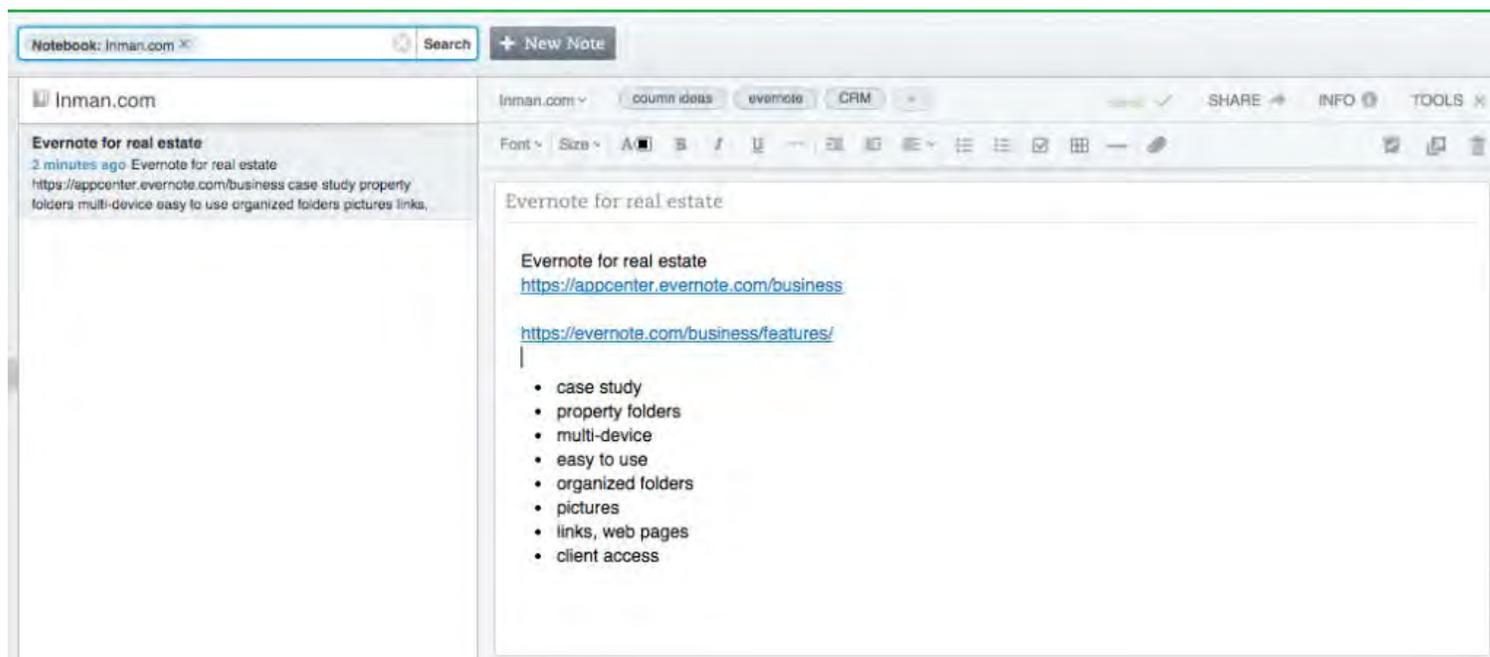
Most everything we need to remember falls under a larger category, and this is where most general note-taking tools go awry. They make it too easy for us to mismanage the method by which we try to manage ourselves.

Then there's **Evernote**. I'm not pulling the curtain on anything here; I'm sure you've heard of it. But do you use it? Here's why I think you should.

The sale

Real estate agents meet a lot of people, handle a lot of documents, and are always operating under the influence of concurrent burdens for multiple clients. This is why we use CRMs (customer relationship managers), right? And this is why I write about software that can help automate your marketing, right?

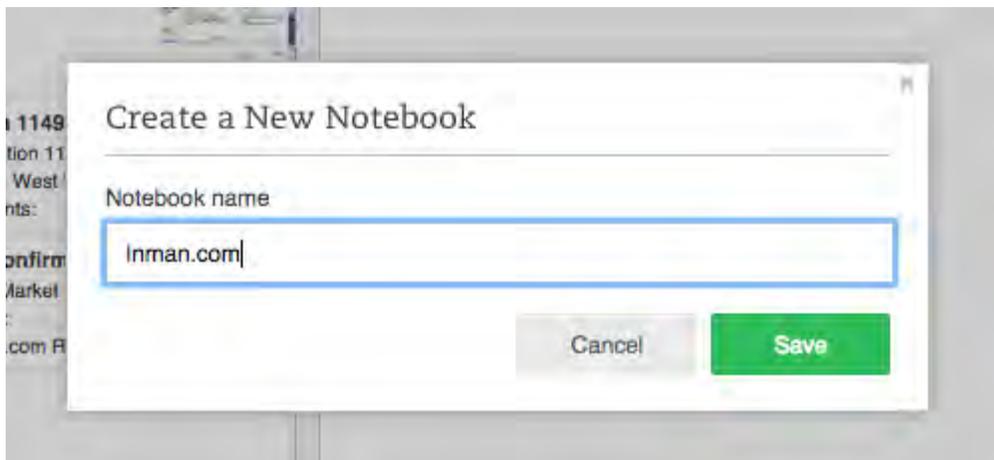
Here's what's cool about Evernote: It doesn't promise to automate anything or make you better at sales. In essence, it takes your proverbial kitchen junk drawer of important tasks, notes, documents, people and pictures, and it quickly categorizes them for you into a single interface.



It then provides you access to that drawer from any device you're using. Plus, every time you open it, everything is right in front of you. Or at least very easy to find.

But there's so much more. Evernote's folder categorization is a great way to build listing files. Everything pertaining to that home, from the client contacts to pictures of the sunroom, can be done directly from the Evernote app as you go. It'll be there when you open your laptop or tap your tablet. Share each folder with team members or provide full access to your clients so they

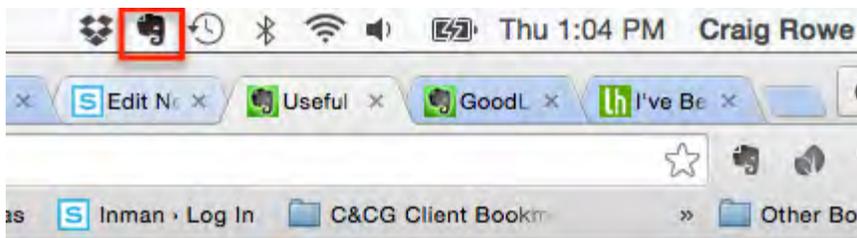
can engage with every step of your marketing process.



That's a nice touch of transparency that more complex solutions (read: most CRMs) don't make as simple, if it all. Any form of document can be uploaded, and like everything else that gets noted, you can tag it according to a folder's title.

If you love checklists to run down items before closing, you can create them inside each folder or use subfolders. If you want to produce an activity summary for your client, Evernote lets you quickly assemble an entire notebook of items into a presentation.

This is a great way to demonstrate market activity in case you need to approach the idea of a price reduction. And because pictures are such a valuable asset in any listing process, Evernote makes that simple, too. Either upload photos from other sources, save them from Web pages, or use your device's camera to save them directly into the appropriate notebook.



Other intrinsic uses for Evernote in real estate include grabbing Web pages and links to valuable industry articles with the Web clipper tool (and making a note about why you saved it); using it to write and categorize transaction-oriented letters; tracking the Web pages and pictures of houses that buyers share; organizing receipts, via picture, for tax time; or searching scanned or uploaded documents using Evernote's OCR (optical character recognition) functionality.

I recommend watching this [brief video case study](#) of a real estate firm in Austin, Texas, using Evernote. Yes, it's heavy-handed and produced by Evernote, but it nonetheless demonstrates

a few ways the software can be leveraged.

If it helps, I've used it myself in every capacity noted in the video.

The close

In the interest of full disclosure, I'm a champion of Evernote; I've used it for years. It's very simple and endlessly versatile, but because of that, your junk drawer can become your hoard drawer. Don't let it drown you.

You can get just about everything in the free version of Evernote. The "business" upgrade is \$10 per month per user, which is way cheaper than most CRMs, as well as significantly easier to use. It also connects to Salesforce, in case you're already entrenched.

Because there's just so much device-wide integration and ease of organization, I can't help but think Evernote would benefit just about any real estate business.

Start by saving this column.

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Do you use Evernote? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

HOMEPREZZO

TECHNOLOGY

HomePrezzo gives agents an alternative to PowerPoint for listing, marketing presentations

Intelligent presentation software for real estate



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 3, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

When I say I'm not a fan of PowerPoint, I don't mean the software itself. I mean that I don't like what most people do with it; which more often than not equates to inducing their audience into a REM cycle.

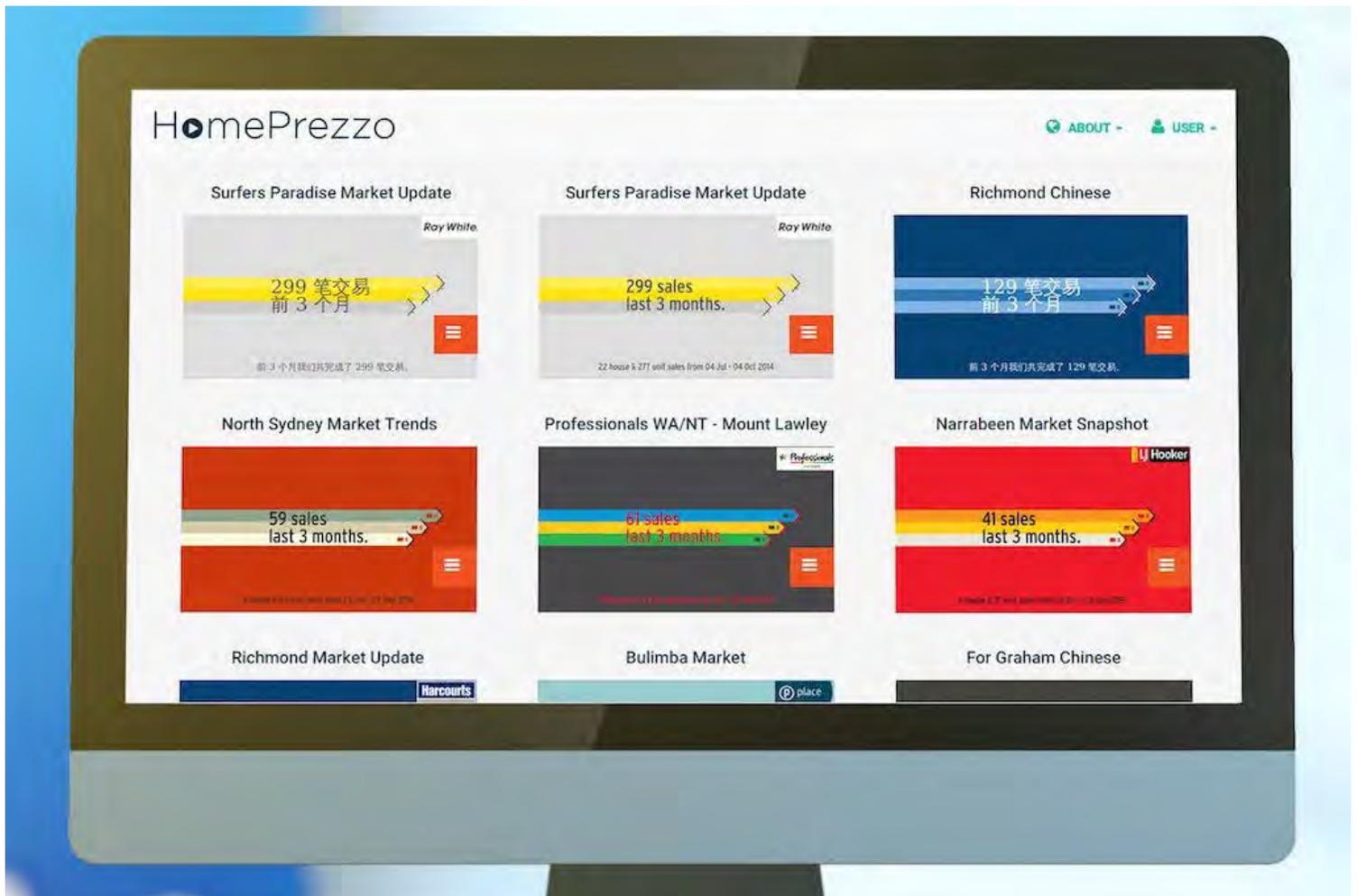
This conference room cocktail of unoriginality and tedium has regrettably become a staple of the modern business presenter. Real estate agents are especially susceptible to its ills, primarily because most listing presentations are going to come chock-full o' facts, like average days on market and how many homes like theirs sold in the last 90 days. Admittedly, PowerPoint does make it easy to present facts. Mundane, mouth-breathing facts.

My hope is that [HomePrezzo](#), available soon in the United States, can wake us all up from our presentation haze.

The sale

Many years ago, any sort of Web-based animation used to be called "flash." That wasn't a cheesy euphemism; it was because the Macromedia product that could animate shapes and text into compelling substantive content was called Flash. It was used so often in overly done website introductions that like PowerPoint, people just tired of seeing it. Adobe now owns it, and it's much more than it once was. Thankfully.

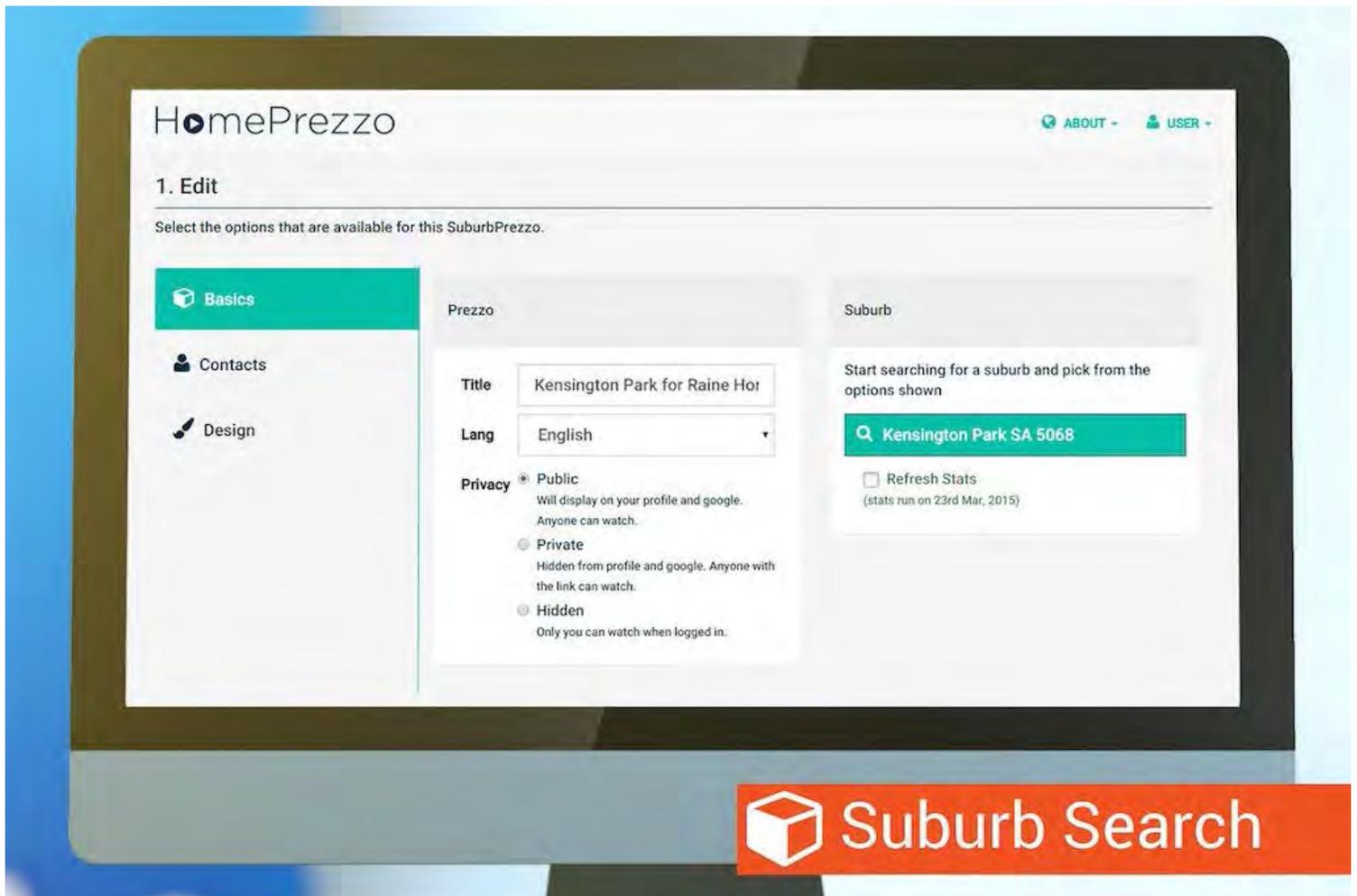
Anyway, Flash is the easiest comparison, visually, to HomePrezzo. It takes the information you would normally shoot lifeless with PowerPoint bullets and translates it into vibrant, smoothly animated video presentations.



There are icons and symbols and soundtracks, and everything you do will look like it was created by a professional developer.

HomePrezzo comes with loaded templates with set colors and text schemes. You can also upload your image, logo and contact points so they're always there, ready to be plugged in.

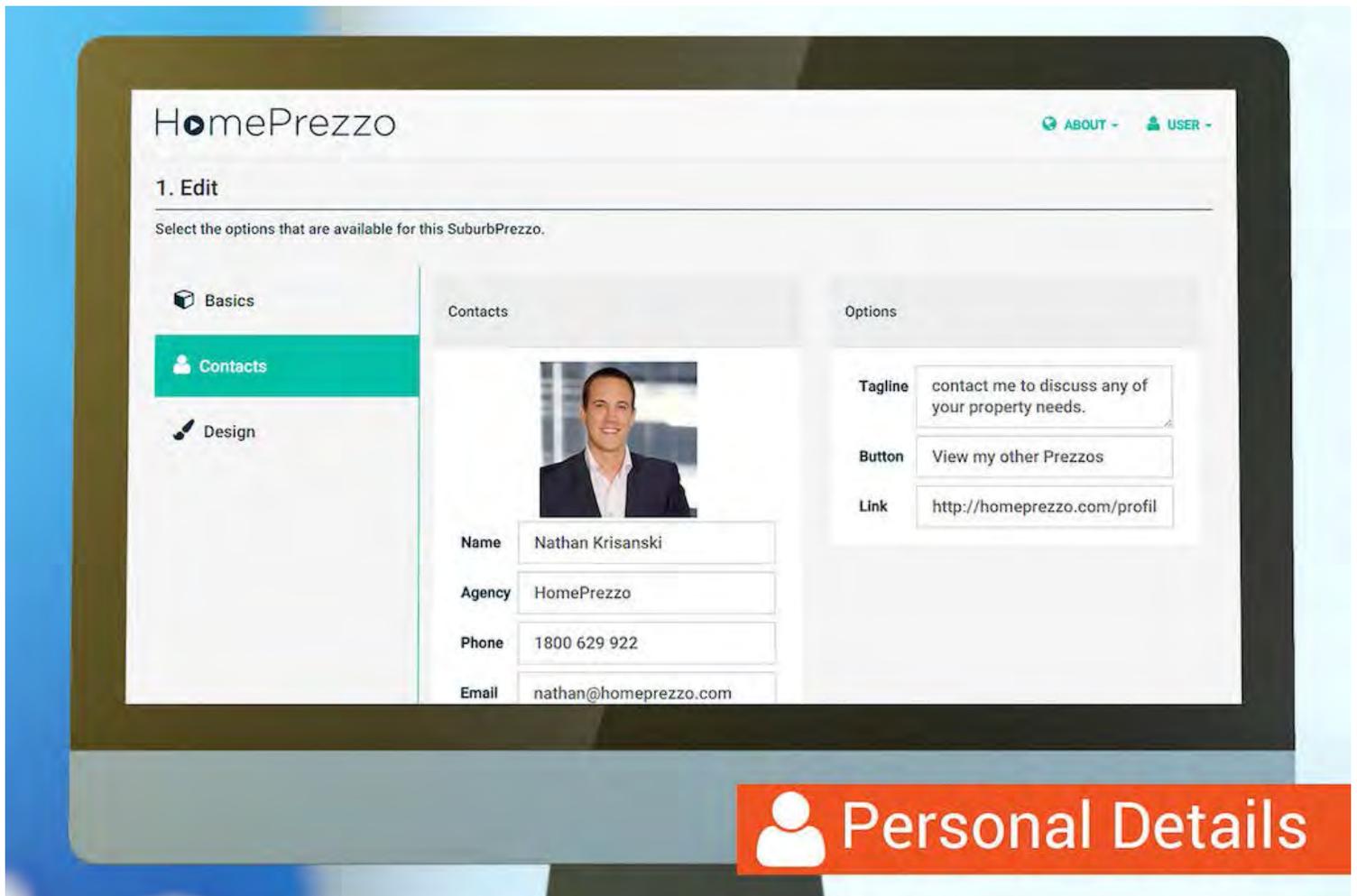
Best of all, it's tailored specifically to real estate agents.



HomePrezzo goes beyond just slick graphics and robust color menus. It connects with CoreLogic's data stream so all the market metrics you need are flowing directly into the software. Search your listing's suburb and select the most pertinent pieces of research to support your listing strategy.

This intersection of data and artistry can lead to some pretty sweet marketing collateral. In essence, HomePrezzo makes animated infographics. It takes watching only a few examples to understand how much more engaging this asset can make your client meetings.

There are other uses for HomePrezzo, too. Use it to make quarterly market reports instead of another PDF document. Email your effort to clients, load it on your website, and share it to your social networks. HomePrezzo can also be used in general branding efforts to introduce your team or announce a list of recent solds.



The benefit of innovations in marketing content production is that they help us think beyond the ways we typically leverage products of their ilk. No one emails an entire PowerPoint as a way to introduce themselves to a potential client. I hope not, anyway.

HomePrezzo's interface is attractive, and organic.

I would warn, however, not to overdo it. Like actual video, keep things brief and corporeal. Engaging, but not tedious. Remember the role of your presentation. It's not supposed to do the work for you; it's supposed to support the work you do. Don't let HomePrezzo's gloss lull you into presentation apathy; meaning, don't neglect good data and copy for the aesthetic.

The close

HomePrezzo was built and launched in Australia; its stateside debut has yet to happen. "Soon," I'm told.

I don't think HomePrezzo is something you're going to use for every listing. The Standard license is priced at \$50/month, capped at 15 "Prezzos." The Pro version is \$100/month for 50 Prezzos; quite the volume discount. You can try it for free.

Until HomePrezzo is up and running at full sprint here, continue to think of new ways to leverage cool tech to present your work to your clients. It's your work, after all. Do it justice: Uninstall PowerPoint.

Get a full week's worth of real estate tech reviews delivered straight to your inbox!

Do you use HomePrezzo? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

PINTEREST

TECHNOLOGY

Pinterest's contextual content offers several ways to influence your marketing

Take your pinning to the next level



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 6, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

You can't write a column about technology in real estate and not address the Internet's most frequented social media tools. That'd be tantamount to a website about cars never talking about the Corvette. Or the GTO.

Point being, there are a ton of awesome ways to redline your sales using the tools and resources I talk about in this space, but sometimes our hands may already be on the right wheel.

We just need to know how to navigate the course.

The sale

At the start of 2015, [Pinterest](#) had about 47 million active monthly users in the United States, according to mashable.com.

From a marketing theory standpoint, what makes Pinterest most valuable is the idea of “long-tail content,” or what I like to call contextual marketing. This means you can use like-minded ideas and byproducts loosely related to your listing or services to build a compelling case for your product. It's like a cruise line selling images of people on a lonely island. Or Coke selling “happiness.” Leveraging Pinterest for real estate is about highlighting the experiences your listing is capable of providing to that potential buyer or seller.

Don't just pin images of the home's spacious flagstone back patio and intricate garden pathways; create boards of “Patio Party Ideas” and “This Summer's Hottest Grilling Recipes.”

Create a Board ✕

Name

Don't forget to name your board!

Description

Category

Add a map? No

Keep it secret? No [Learn more](#)

Who can add Pins? [Learn more](#)

 TripTarp, LLC
you created this board

And the best part of this process is that so much of it is done with content created by others. In fact, Pinterest created the idea of “curated content” in today’s Internet marketing milieu. By choosing the best of what others have created, you become the default resource for what’s cool and first in garage organization and bonus room paint schemes. Just like an art museum curator deciding the time is right to mix in some Andrew Wyeth. People come to see Wyeth’s Americana realism, not the person who made the choice to showcase it. Or is it the other way around? There’s a lot of hidden influences in our buying decisions.

To get into usage specifics on Pinterest, because it does change quite a bit, you can create public boards and private boards.

If you’re helping a buyer, for example, create a private board and give them access to see the pictures of home styles or characteristics they prefer and to pin to the board themselves. It’ll

build quickly. Plus, you may find out sooner than later about their actual preference. Just watch the patterns.



Listing agents can create public boards for a client's home and share it on the marketing collateral. If your client has a particularly nice decorating touch, comment on it and keep it public, because the pinning spreads quickly, like office gossip.

With each listing, choose one or two of the home's highlights and pin content that relates to it. Large, well-organized garage? Capitalize on it. Chef's kitchen? Go nuts.

You can also use it to keep clients aware of the market. Pin shots of recently sold homes or comparable listings priced differently than theirs. Use it to also offer inspiration within your market, pinning homes that stand out or of compelling amenities, like parks and retail centers. Also, highlights of the cities and towns in which you do business are great ways to share market content.

But don't just use Pinterest for your clients, use it for your own business. Pin agent pictures and bios, logos, and company events.



Remember, you can post links, too, so insert the home’s “official” listing page as often as makes sense. It will get carried on when others pin it. Plus, the more active you are, the more frequently your name and brand will be associated with cool ideas about homes in your market.

I highly recommend adding detailed — but not wordy — descriptions to your images. All content is searchable, and even though pictures are worth what it’s said they are worth, words still mean a lot, too.

(At least, they do to me.)

Lastly, don’t forget videos. I think they should be used sparingly, maybe one per board at most. With too much video, you increase the risk of production quality issues and interrupt the sharing mindset. That is, if a user is floating around your boards, liking and repinning, the video may hinder that process, or interrupt the flow. Use with care.

The close

Pinterest, like other forms of social media, should be used to offer supportive outreach and branding about your efforts. Don’t rely on it as the single source of marketing or customer contact.

It’s very easy to use, which is why I talked more about strategies than learning curve. Seventy

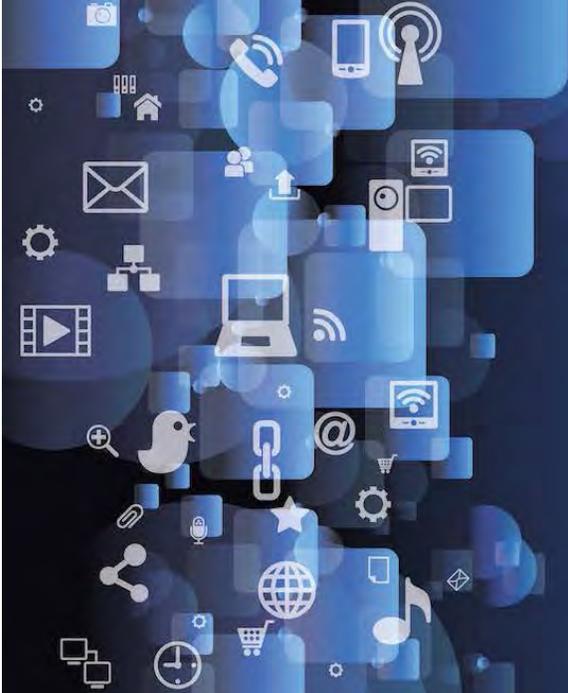
millions users don't log on to something hard to use. Still, that could be its downfall: don't un-commit once you get going. And certainly don't overdo it. The Internet rewards authenticity, so don't mail it in.

Pinterest has power, there's no doubt about that. It's doesn't have Facebook's power, but when it comes to your marketing budget, there are no ad rates or boosting to consider. Just pin.

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Do you use Pinterest? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

SHOEBOXED

TECHNOLOGY

Shoebboxed offers slick options for agents to prevent the ‘Costanza wallet’

Keep track of receipts, mileage and more



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 7, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you’d like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Real estate agents handle a lot of paperwork. It drives me nuts that an industry so full of first adopters remains so steadfastly adhered to pulp products, but I've come to accept that like the electric car, the adoption will be drawn out. (I've also accepted that my angst on the matter is based largely on assumptive generalizations about how easy it would be to make such a drastic change in business operation.)

Until we flip the calendar to that page in time, there are all kinds of cool tools and tech that can help real estate agents manage transactions electronically. And with something like **Shoeboxed**, you can also manage all the paperwork that manages you.

The sale

Shoeboxed is a ones and zeros version of the shoebox you use to store and sort receipts, expenses, business cards and mileage notes from your year in real estate. Every showing, listing presentation over costly coffee, and networking event entry fee leads to an annoying accumulation of tiny paper reports that you need to prove you're doing things above the line. If you're like me, they usually hang around the wallet until you're just short of **Costanza-level**, back-aching thickness.

In my opinion, the coolest feature of Shoeboxed is its Magic Envelope. When you sign up, the Magic Envelope (an actual mailer) can be shoved full of all the miscellaneous receipts and reports and then hurried off to Shoeboxed. They'll organize its contents for you and make sure it gets entered properly into your account profile. The shipping is free both ways. Slick, right?

The screenshot displays the Shoeboxed interface. On the left, a table lists receipts with columns for Vendor, Date, Total, and Category. The main area shows a detailed view of a receipt from PFD Food Services Pty Ltd, including fields for Vendor, Date, Currency, Total, Tax, Payment type, and Notes. A 'Categories' section allows for adding or removing categories. The interface includes navigation and utility icons such as 'Change Document Type', 'Change page', 'Close', 'Zoom', and a trash icon.

Vendor	Date	Total	Category
PFD food Services	01/05/2014	1,182.40	XERO - Entertainment
Business Trip			Tris
Freely	05/12/2013	1,234.00	XERO - Advertising XERO - Office Equip
Amos Consulting	24/10/2013	123.00	XERO - Office Equipment -John Smith
Bunnings	02/02/2014	34.40	XERO - General Expenses
Taste On Sussex	06/02/2013	17.20	XERO - Advertising
Port Philip Publishing	24/06/2014	89.00	XERO - Advertising
Port Philip Publishing	01/01/2000	49.00	XERO - Advertising -John Smith
Train Ticket	05/03/2014	2.50	XERO - Travel - National
Franklin	05/04/2013	3.95	Business Stuff Personal Stuff XERO
Travel Ticket	18/02/2011	2.50	XERO - Travel - National
Travel Ticket	23/02/2011	2.50	XERO - Travel - National
Franklin	14/06/2011	2.00	XERO - Advertising
Mildren Prestige	28/05/2013	214.55	XERO - Cleaning
AGL Retail Energy	24/04/2011	100.00	XERO - Light, Power, Heating

When using it on your phone (iPhone or Android), Shoeboxed uses the device's camera as a

scanner, extracting the most pertinent data from your receipts and business cards. For the former, it grabs the date, amount, vendor, and payment type. You can later edit if needed. The data file is created in your account, later to be used in monthly, quarterly, or annual expense reports, as well as for taxes purposes. It also categorizes the expense for you. Was it lunch with a client or the cost of a continuing education course?

Shoebboxed allows users to send email receipts via Gmail directly into the system by simply forwarding them to receipts@shoebboxed.com. I can't tell you how many email payment confirmations I have starred, flagged and marked as unread floating all over my ten active email inboxes. (Seriously, ten.) If you use Triplt.com to organize your travel, then you know how awesomely useful this functionality can be.

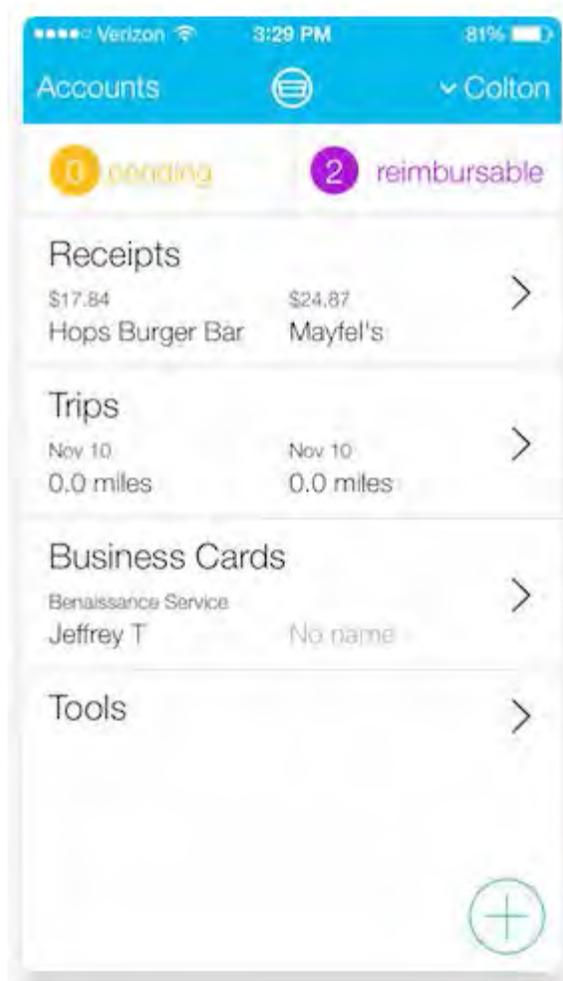
All Receipts 20 documents, \$508.12 Total

<input type="checkbox"/>	Vendor	Date	Total	Tax	Category	Payment type	Date added
<input type="checkbox"/>	 TestMYOB	08/08/2014	\$40.00		MYOB - Accounting/Bookkeeping Fees	Card	08/08/2014
<input type="checkbox"/>	 TestMYOB	07/08/2014	\$0.00		MYOB - Accounting/Bookkeeping Fees	Card	07/08/2014
<input type="checkbox"/>	 test	30/06/2014	\$10.00			Card	30/06/2014
<input type="checkbox"/>	 test	06/10/2014	\$0.00			Card	15/06/2014
<input type="checkbox"/>	 test	15/09/2010	\$200.01	\$11.16	General Expenses	Other	29/08/2013
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Spit Junction News	12/09/2010	\$3.80	\$0.35		Cash	29/08/2013

Mileage tracking can be tedious. I'm sure you're familiar with having to jump on to Google maps at the end of the day to manually enter the addresses of the ten properties you visited so you can total your mileage. That's fun. Don't forget a trip to the sign shop.

The Shoebboxed app also has a mileage feature that uses your phone's GPS to track driving distances. (Remember to begin and end the mileage tracking.)

You may notice that Shoebboxed gives you multiple methods by which to get your information into the system. I think it's best to use one method for each form of data and stick to that. Use the app for mileage tracking, the email forwarding for electronic receipts, and then the Magic Envelopes for all the paper. In short, the more you can leave up to them to do for you, the better.



The business card data extraction is cool, but why use yet another tool for contact information? I'd leave them out of your shoebox. I wouldn't worry about it.

Shoeboxed has a number of [pricing models](#). The free version gives one user five documents a month by electronic submission only. As you go up in price, you get more documents to submit, more users, and more Magic Envelopes. If you're a busy agent team of two, I think the Classic plan is worth considering. Bigger teams and firms can shoot for the Executive plan at about \$83 per month.

The close

I don't think Shoeboxed will change the way you sell real estate. But it sure can help you handle all the paper-based minutiae that comes with being an independent contractor.

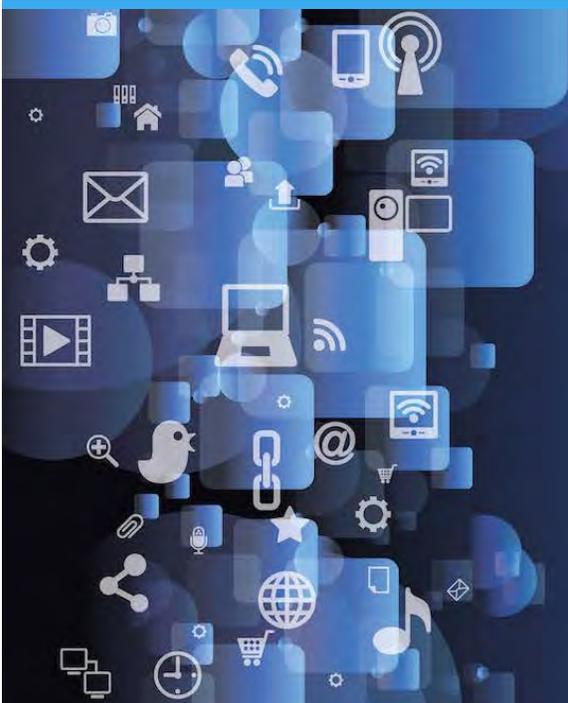
I can't tell you how much I would love for a person to just storm into my home office every day to sweep up all the bits of tax-deductibility that ends up everywhere except where it should be. I found a lunch tab from 2012 the other day. To be frank, nothing makes me happier than paying my accountant. I don't even blink when I get his bill.

Anyway, if you need help getting beyond the paper clips and staples, look into Shoeboxed.com.

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Do you use Shoeboxed? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

BEEGIT

MARKETING, TECHNOLOGY

Beegit's creative collaboration platform a savvy resource for agencies that invest in marketing

A copy and content tool for heavy hitters



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 8, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

My wife and I travel often to ski and snowboard (she's the two-planker), typically spending many days in Park City, Utah. We have a friend up there who sells for Berkshire Hathaway.

Naturally, we talk a lot about what it takes to build, market, manage — and, of course, buy — the lavish homes embedded in the hills along the lift lines.

And what it takes is money. Piles of it.

I love thumbing the big firms' luxury catalogs to read the often grossly effusive, typo-riddled home descriptions. I know that sounds harsh; and in the interest of full disclosure, the primary culprit isn't my friend's firm.

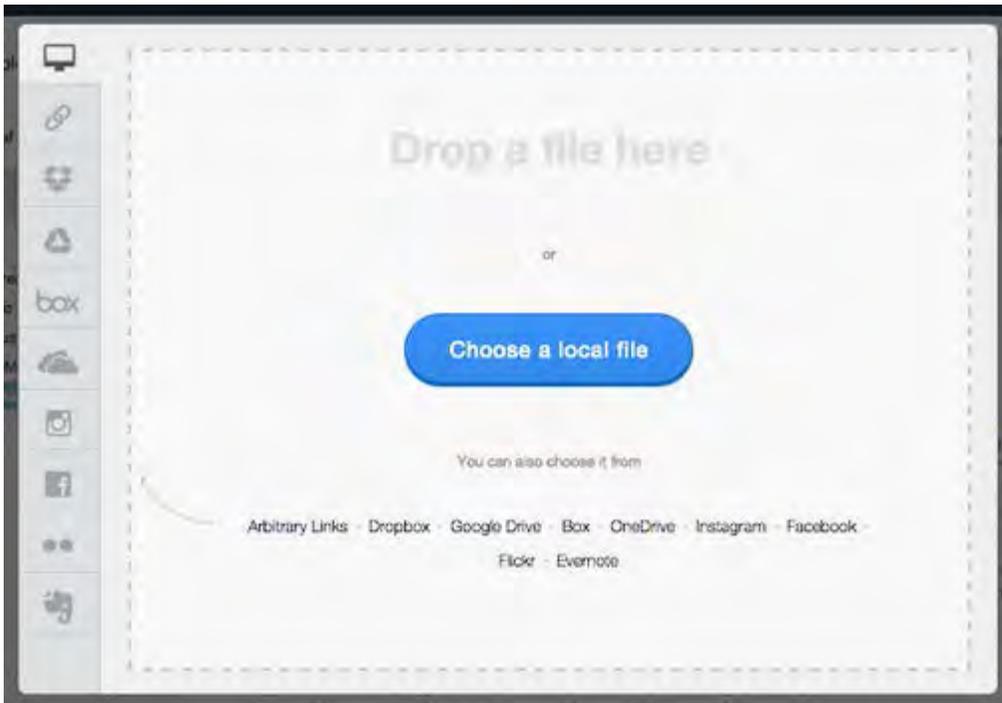
Thus, after struggling through the third instance of "ski-in-ski-out" in the same block of copy, I can't help but wonder: would using [Beegit.com's](#) collaborative content writing platform make their clients' listings sound more appealing? Or at the very least, would it cut down on typos?

The sale

Beegit.com is software that will primarily appeal to large firms that handle very expensive property.

The majority of residential agencies simply don't invest that much in copy and content to justify use of such a purely creative tool. Better stated, most firms don't sell property with a selling cycle that can accommodate being marketed in a long form, seasonal print catalog. A \$250,000 three-bedroom and a \$7,000,000 mountainside compound are two entirely different products.

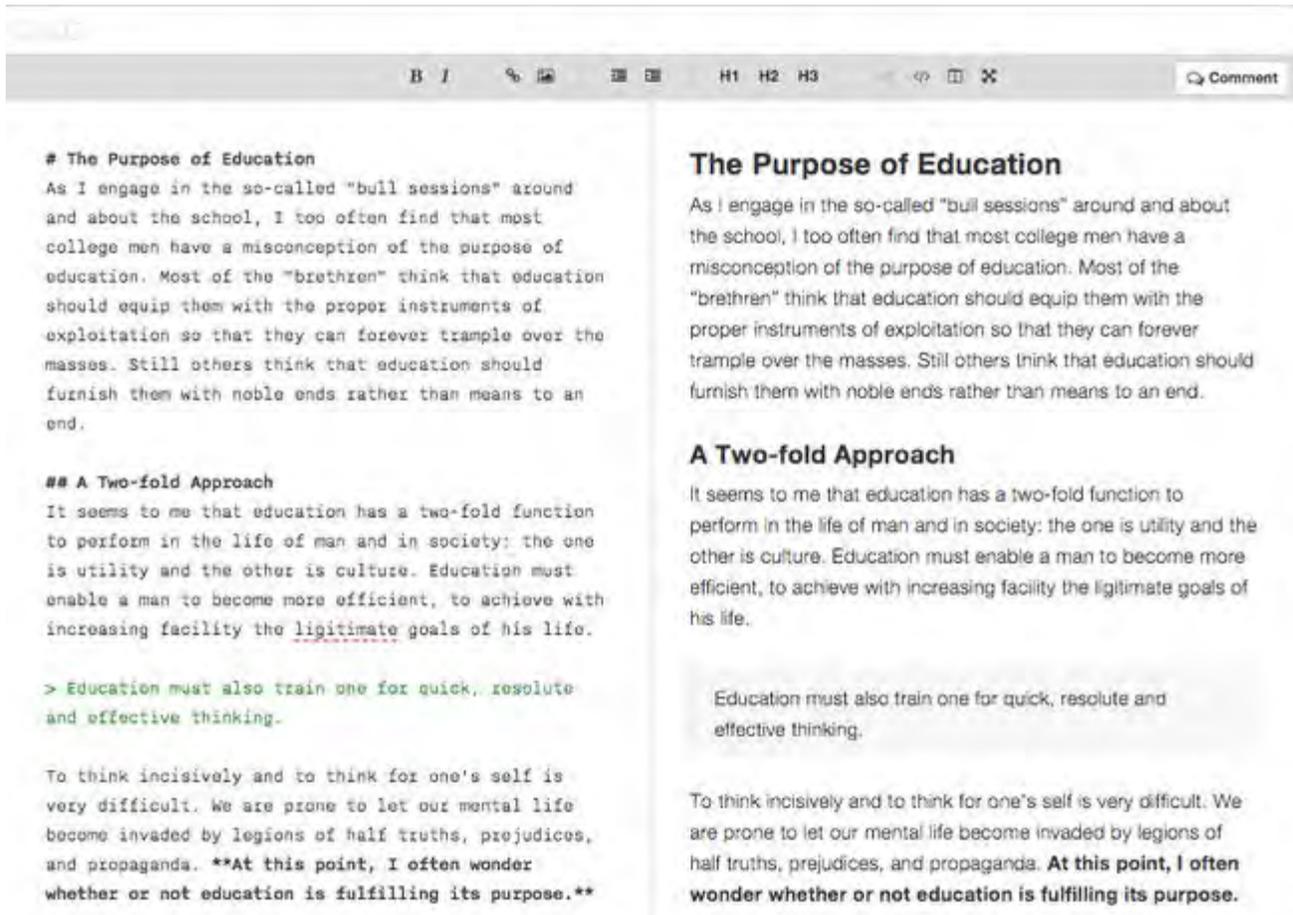
When your pricey, professionally bound collateral is mailed out and serving as a cocktail coaster on country club locker room lounge tables in some of our nation's most expensive ZIP codes, it's critical that its copy be original, tight and tonally consistent. It better read similarly on the web, too.



While Beegit's highest and best use is as a writing tool, its simple collaboration features provide an easy white-board style of team feedback. For example, if the name of the sculpture elaborating a guest house foyer escapes you, simply tag your colleague using "@" to invite comment. As someone who is often needing client or team insight as I go, that's a very practical bit of programming.

Best of all, inline commenting beats sending a separate email to solicit input on a half-completed rough draft. This way, listing copy can be as complete as possible before it enters the editing queue. It's like Microsoft Word's "track changes" tool, but endlessly better.

Beegit allows the writers to maintain control of their copy and posit points on verbiage choices within the confines of the piece, not via yet another chain of argumentative emails.

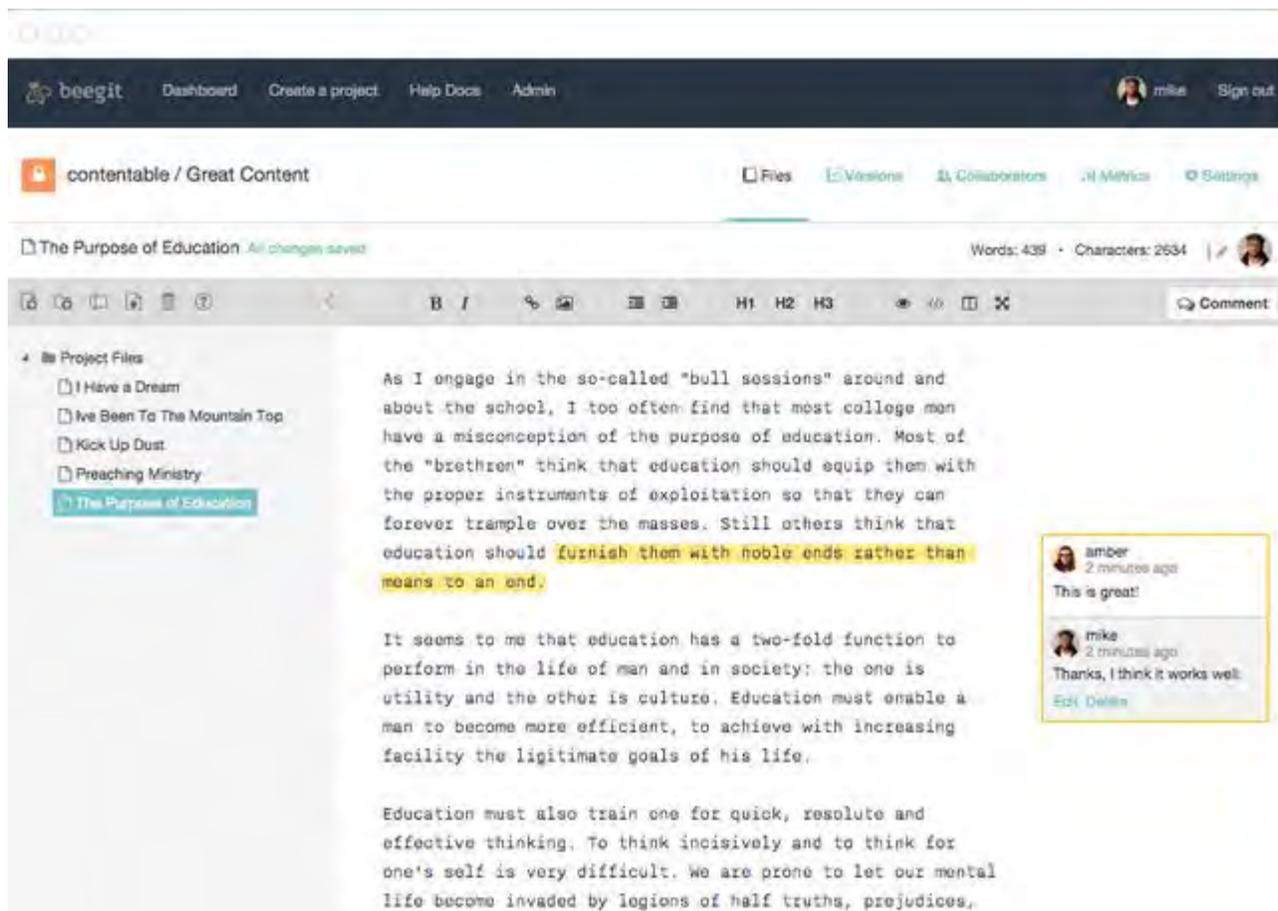


Beegit also uses Markdown code, which is essentially a bridge between standard text and HTML. Once you learn it—and it’s not tough at all—your copy becomes imminently more flexible among publishing platforms.

Documents in Markdown can be exported cleanly to website editors or other online content management platforms. I use Markdown in every piece I write for Inman. It’s fast and useful, and Beegit lets you split screens between plain text and Markdown so you can monitor formatting as you go.

I’m not trying to pick on Word, but its HTML translation is downright criminal. It embeds an array of chunky code and fails on multiple levels to translate what you see on screen to suitable web-ready copy. Markdown eliminates the need to ever rely on “Save as HTML” again.

Plus, you can import your Beegit Markdown to Adobe’s InDesign, which would surely be the primary tool for pagination design of lengthy marketing packages.



Beegit also allows the input and control of images alongside your copy. This adds some content production functionality above its usefulness as a team writing tool.

And beyond the inline collaboration, Beegit connects to a host of major content storage and management resources, like Box.net, Evernote, and Google Drive, as well as social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. So you can grab property images to inspire your copy.

In short, Beegit serves as a CDN, or content delivery network. It connects and helps create the copy and content you need to market listings and services.

The close

The team at Beegit offers custom content marketing solutions on top of its writing and content creation tools, but I think agencies would be initially best served with its primary offer—and it's a strong one.

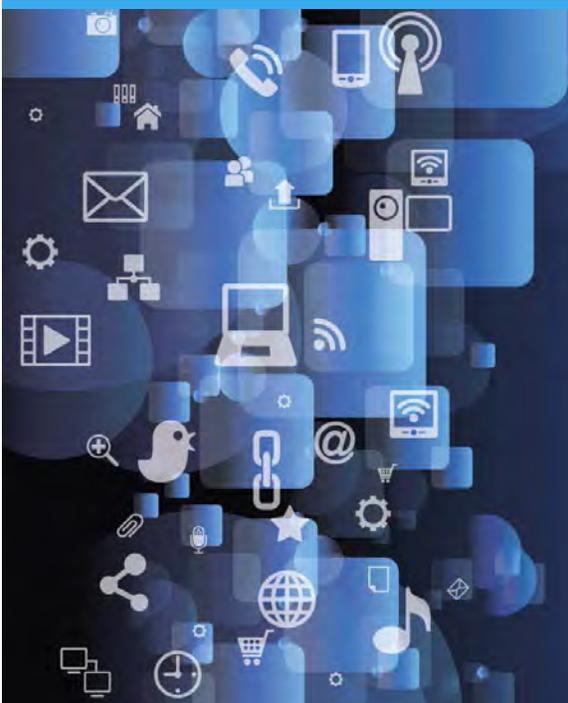
If you consider yourself an outlier in your market, an agency that pushes your marketing beyond what's expected, than Beegit may be worth the monthly overhead. Since most firms wouldn't have more than a few folks handling creative services, the \$49.00/ten member/month plan would be plenty suitable.

If you are a real estate brokerage that markets luxury and second homes, I urge you to consider ways to leverage tools like Beegit. The industry is changing—marketing needs a place under the same roof as sales. Tools like this can help you lead that change.

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Do you use Beegit? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

SPROUT SOCIAL

Sprout Social can help agents flourish on social media

A robust tool for managing your Internet presence



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 9, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Social media marketing doesn't have to be your tentpole marketing effort.

However, if you're going to do it, you have to commit. Weeks-old Facebook posts will do more

harm than good. If you're going to spend time on LinkedIn, make sure you stay linked in.

Granted, it's not always easy. What do you say? When is the best time to post? Logging in to three or four different platforms can be pretty tedious. And distracting.

Well, **Sprout Social** might be able to help.

The sale

I've been using Sprout Social for almost two years, so consider this review somewhat informed.

Sprout Social connects all of your social media profiles into a single interface. Simply log in, and post to whatever account you choose. I can't tell you the last time I've seen any of my clients' actual Twitter pages. Everything I need to properly manage the account is accessible via Sprout Social's dashboard.

However, it's more than a convenient compendium for your online personas; it also takes the complexities out of scheduling posts. You have a couple of options, in fact. You can create a Sprout Queue, in which you designate a number of posts per day at specific times. Type up some content and select "Queue Next." That's it. It'll publish on the next established time, whether it's in 10 minutes, two hours, or sometime tomorrow.

As you compose a tweet or post, you can also use the embedded calendar feature, which shows you a month-out view. Choose a date and time and you're done.

Agents can use this to time marketing efforts with effective dates on listing agreements, or around open houses.

With your announcements and pictures and copy ready, schedule a series of social callouts a couple of times per week for each listing. I like to use Sprout Social like a radio campaign, repeating important posts at different times throughout the week as way to better blanket your audience.

You can measure your content's effectiveness as well. Sprout Social will email you engagement reports, or you can scroll through graphs in your dashboard. Use it to find out when potential buyers are most active on your Facebook or Google Plus pages, or what tweets get the most response and when.

Sprout Social also makes it easy to find influential social profiles with its Discovery and keyword search features.

The Facebook functionality isn't as robust as using Facebook itself, but that's ultimately for the best. You can promote your business-related content during the day without being overly distracted by your friend's latest rant about politics or Facebook beating you up about boosting posts.

And if you need content ideas, Sprout Social allows you to connect Feedly RSS feeds for fast news and content access. Pretty simple stuff.

If you happen to work within a team, Sprout Social enables task assignments and admin control of different social profiles by separate individuals. That can be quite productive to divide and conquer, but that also means that when it comes to messaging and property features, everyone should be on the same page. It's important you don't post the same sort of content or post within seconds of one another.

The feature I like best is Sprout Social's Chrome browser applet. If I come across some shareable content in a browser tab, I can send, schedule or queue a post in any of my connected networks without having to enter the software's dashboard. It makes curating content very convenient and helps you stay timely. Big fan.

The close

If you're serious about your social, give this tool a look. There's also Hootsuite, which I used at one time, too. Compare the two.

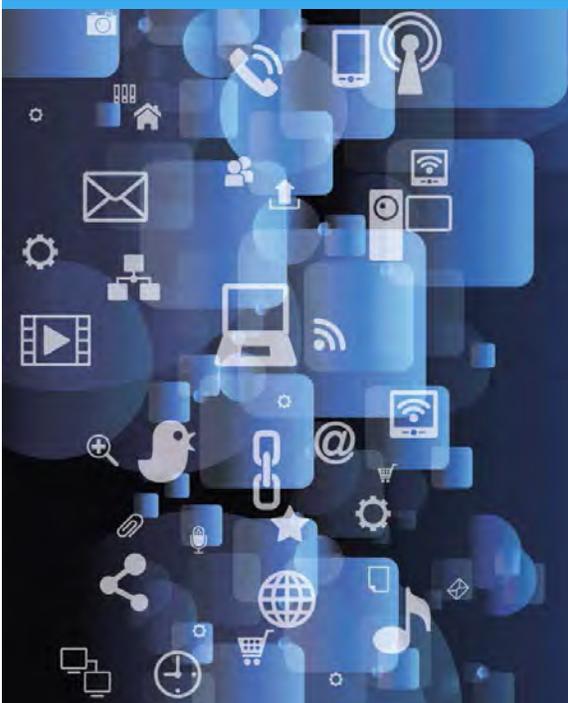
Here's the catch: It's pretty expensive. The lowest plan is \$59 month. Even though that offers connectivity of 10 profiles, most agents would be running only two or three. I suppose a couple of agents could split the cost to manage their respective profiles. That probably makes the most sense.

If you're open to the cost and see value in a robust, versatile social media management platform, Sprout Social is a winner.

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Do you use Sprout Social? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

CONSTANT CONTACT

TECHNOLOGY

Constant Contact does everything it should, and even a bit more

Email marketing made easy for agents and brokers



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 10, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Choosing an email marketing tool can be tough.

Not because it's a complicated category of software, and not because it's expensive. It's hard

to choose because there are a lot of them. How do you decide which puppy to adopt? You can't really go wrong. Well, those designer breeds are kind of annoying, like labradoodles or whatever.

But that's not their fault.

The other issue is that just about every CRM (customer relationship manager) or sales software of some kind comes with email marketing functionality. It's right there, tied in to your contacts, hot prospects and current clients. So how could you justify using **Constant Contact**?

The sale

I think stand-alone email marketing clients are for smaller agencies, or agents not overly entrenched in enterprise software; for example, the husband-and-wife teams, and the urban-oriented teams of mobile-savvy agents selling lofts and tiny spaces.

Constant Contact is above all else affordable. At \$35 per month for up 2,500 contacts (\$15 for up to 500), the financial commitment shouldn't be a deciding factor. Granted, **MailChimp** is free for up 2,000 subscribers.

Example of a Sign-Up Form

This is what a your form may look like once you edit it to include your own text, list names, custom fields, colors, and logo.

Outland Alchemy
Your email address: **example@example.com**

Thank you for joining the Outland Alchemy mailing list!
We look forward to keeping you updated

Confirm your email address:

Please provide your information here. Items marked with an '*' require a response for signup.

First Name:

Please select the areas of interest for which you would like to receive occasional email from us.

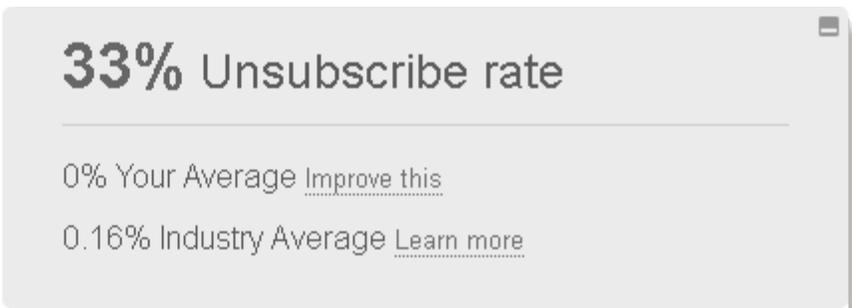
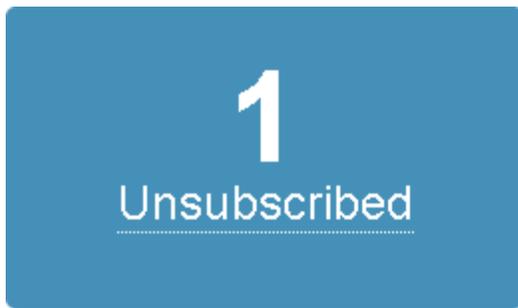
Conference/Tradeshows Signups

General Information

Sign Up

Constant Contact is also super easy. I used it for years and never once needed to peruse through a support forum or contact help. It's easy to build segments, embed contact forms in your website for contact collection, and like other tools of its ilk, you can track opens, click and forwards.

A standout of Constant Contact that will appeal to agents is its multiple methods of pulling in contacts. You can upload a file, like Excel or a .CSV, import them from a Gmail account, or if you're migrating from something like ACT! or Salesforce, you can transport them that way, too. Of course, you can also type in a few at a time.



1 Contact *Select contacts to organize...*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Email	Reason
<input type="checkbox"/>	McCall, Jaime	jmccall@roving.com	No longer in the market for this product

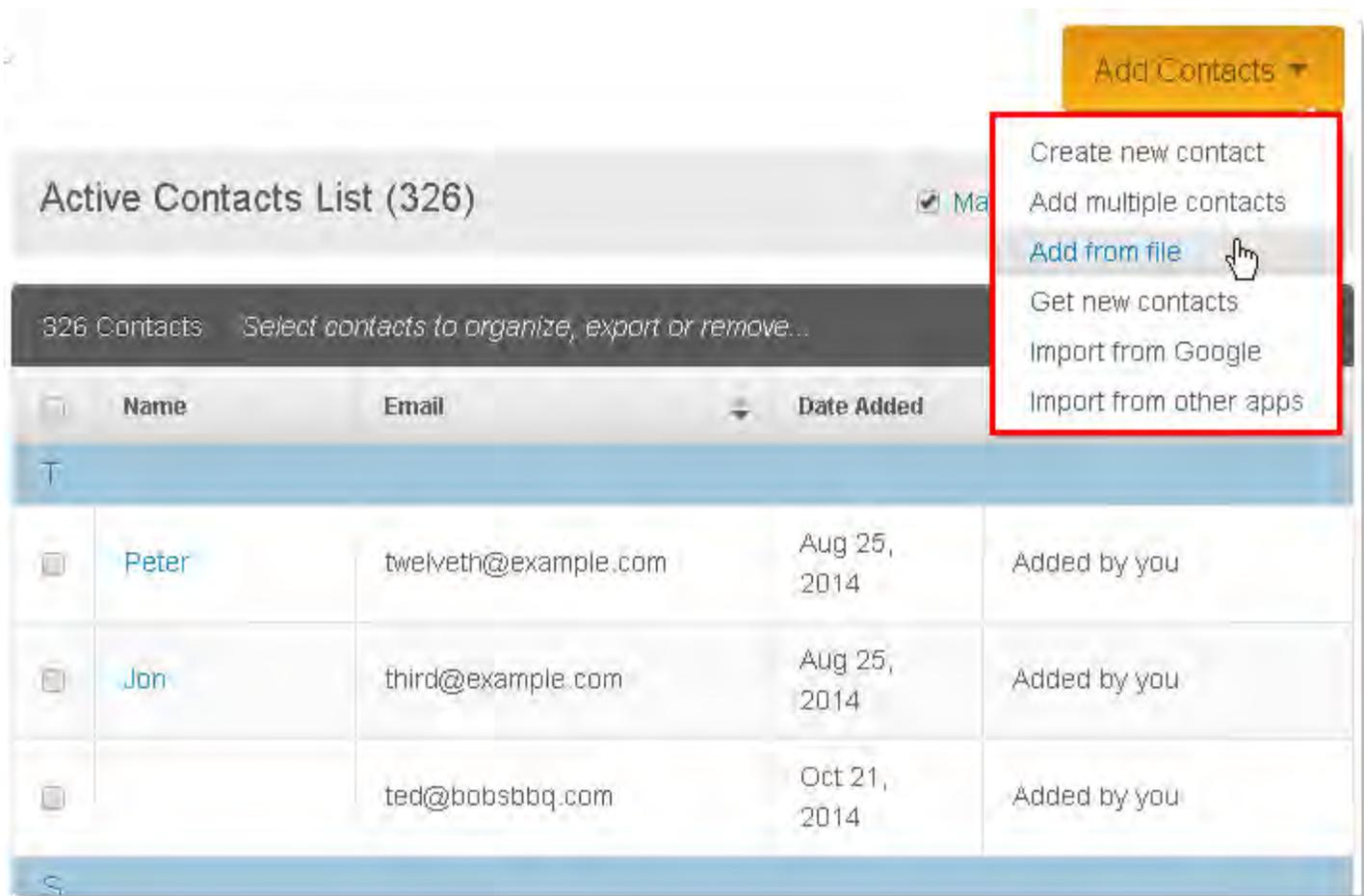
Show 50 rows per page ▾ 1 — 1 of 1 items

Another slick option in Constant Contact is contact tagging. You’ve heard me rant before about audience segmentation. At risk of repeating myself: It’s crucial.

When you import a new contact, they can be assigned a tag, attaching them to a specific user group within your greater contact list.

A practical application for this would be everyone who visited your most recent open house. Tag them with “Mayflower Ave.,” build your email and send. That’s as easy a way to partition contacts as I’ve come across. Use it.

You can also build segments based on more common methods, like those who opened your last two emails or those who clicked through to the property’s YouTube video. If they’re interested in what you’re sending them, use the tools to keep on top of them. I’ve always been a big fan of the marketing metrics even the most fundamental email marketing solutions now put in our hands. Research firms used to make millions finding out this stuff.



Constant Contact is bullish on list maintenance. And for good reason.

The more uninterested readers you keep on a list, the worse your return-on-send will be. Use its list-purging functionality to rid yourself of apathetic subscribers and bounced accounts. It may be tough to swallow, deleting 10 or 15 contacts every few weeks. But in the end, it's going to lead to a stronger contact list.

Like MailChimp, Constant Contact has industry standard benchmarks for readership you can use to measure the effectiveness of what you're sending.

I always found the email-building tools to be pretty simple. But I'm relatively comfortable with drag-and-drop imagery and messing around with graphics. I wager that designing the messages would be your steepest learning curve. Once you got it down though, stay consistent. Don't overdesign just because you can. You want your readers to recognize your brand. You also want to test what does and doesn't work. Try one template for a few months, then see if a few simple changes won't impact readership in some way.

The close

Look, Constant Contact is an easy, affordable and long-proven tool for email marketing. It's

hard to find any drawbacks or areas of complication.

Constant Contact boosts its email marketing with a host of additional pay services, like event promotion, content marketing and a robust survey tool. I've not had a chance to peruse these extended branches, but the single source for each could be beneficial.

In summary, I view Constant Contact as a solid, easy-to-use email marketing solution with some compelling features.

But it still costs more than [MailChimp](#).

Do you use Constant Contact? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

ADOBE ACROBAT DC

TECHNOLOGY

Adobe Acrobat DC is what Acrobat should have been all along

An old standard's upgrade will make it a new favorite



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 13, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

Get a full week's worth of real estate tech reviews delivered straight to your inbox!

The pitch

No one liked spinach when they were kids. Or kale. I recently heard of something called "chicory." Is that a real thing?

Alas, tastes change as we age. As do trends in health food. I can't swing a hipster by the mustache without spilling a cup of kale and lemon leaf smoothie, or some other such mishmash of obscure greens blended with goat yogurt.

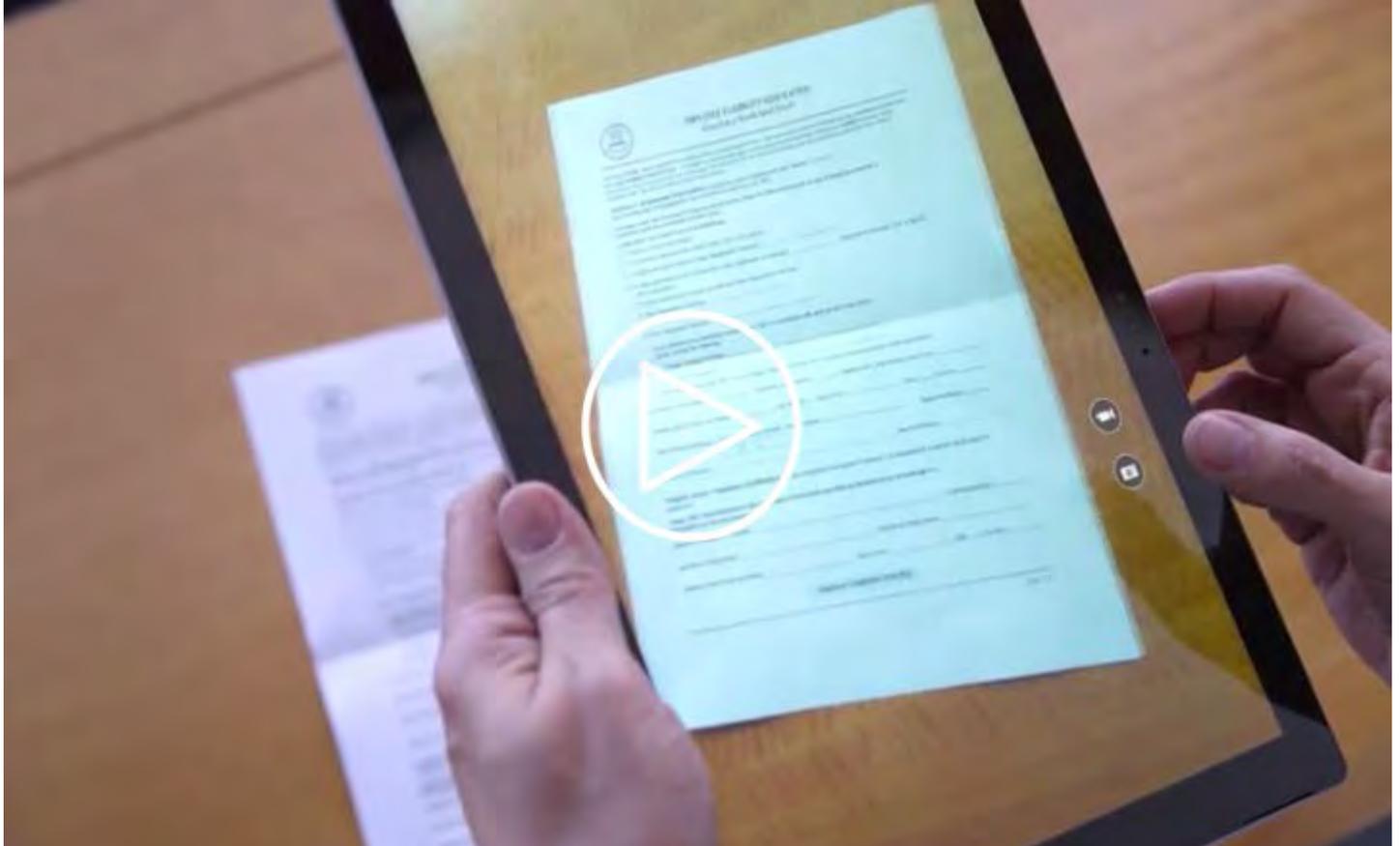
Point is, what didn't work for us at one time can always come back around to being worthwhile. For example, Adobe Acrobat, the ever-ubiquitous, uneditable document format that for decades of online business has served so many purposes and hampered just as many.

Well, **Adobe has revamped the whole enchilada**. And it looks quite good for you.

The sale

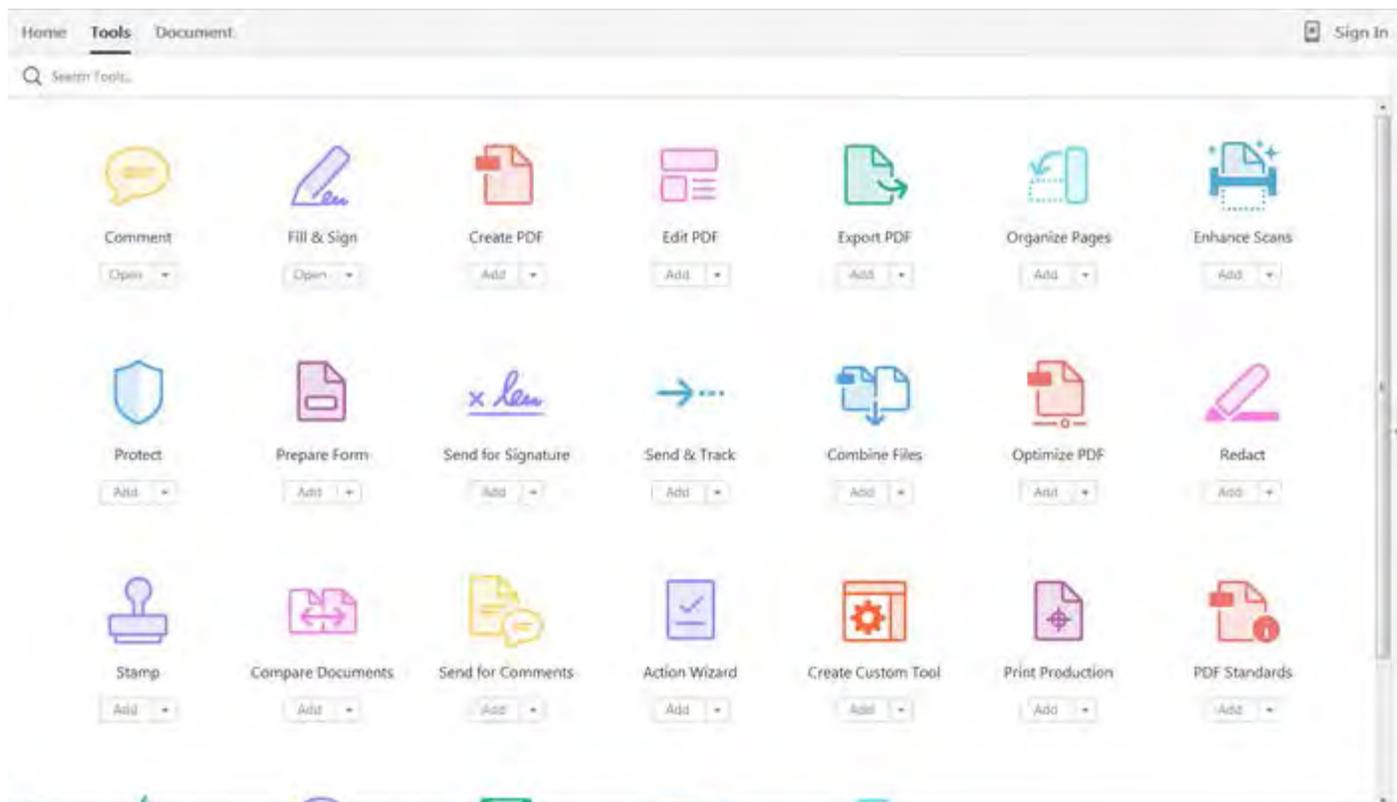
It's best to understand that most real estate agents will by no means leverage the full brunt of the Adobe Document Cloud that supports Acrobat DC. That's OK. The desktop software is rich with plenty of new flexibility and some slick mobile components.

You'll notice right away a whole new UI (user interface) that reflects Acrobat DC's evolution as a full-fledged application, not just a part-time tool stuck in the corner of your desktop screen. The visuals are clean and easy to navigate, and you will want to work with it. It's simply much more functional.



Adobe's Document Cloud is a catchall for Acrobat documents you create across multiple devices in an array of use cases. They're all synced and available everywhere. You can track the key points on each document, like who signed it and when. I can envision a brokerage using Document Cloud as a transaction record archive.

Here's another way to use it: You use Microsoft Word to create a quick addendum documenting an agreed-upon repair your seller will make for the buyer. You send it to Acrobat and save it in the Document Cloud. Instead of emailing it back and forth for printing, scanning or some other rudimentary combination of execution, just bring your tablet along to get manual e-signatures from both parties on the same document.



This is made easy because Acrobat DC may be one of the most simple electronic signature tools to come out in some time. Any Acrobat DC file is instantly ready to be signed, via finger or keyboard, with the Fill & Sign interface. The Fill component of this tool translates any basic field created in a Microsoft Office document into an active, fillable field, just like an HTML form.

Agents could leverage this feature in a number of ways, such as creating a simple "Things To Do Before Your Open House" checklist for your clients. They can check things off right from a phone or tablet screen, sign it for you, and send it back.

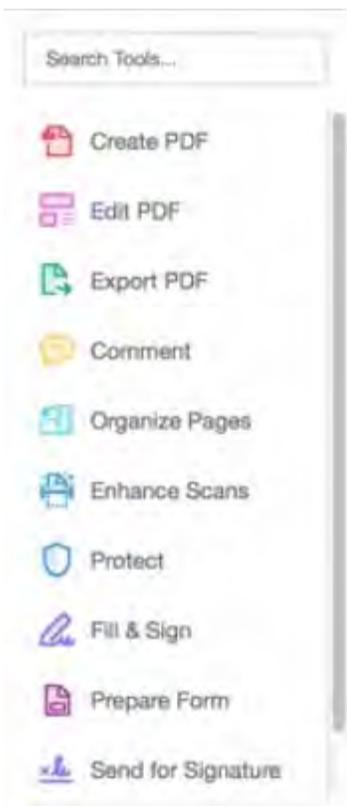


Necessary? No. But it is a slick piece of marketing and transaction oversight.

Options like this are many, thanks to the intrinsic document malleability of this new Acrobat.

Another sharp bit of digital document magic reveals itself when you grab a picture of a paper document using your device's camera. Acrobat DC can then quickly scan it to make it searchable, editable and able to be signed. Multiple pages? Just keep snapping. For agents who like to manage transactions with software or CRMs, this could make dealing with more paper-based colleagues and clients much less painful.

I have a hard time believing the capture accuracy of this feature will not require some patience. And updating. You always need to review documents captured via OCR (optical character recognition.) Everything from lighting to document print quality will impact the final take's legibility. Don't wait until it's your only option for getting a deal done to use it. But if you do and it works, that's a heck of a case study.



Acrobat DC enables users to merge an array of document types into a single PDF. Think about this in terms of managing your office: When a transaction is done and closed, you could assemble every form printed and signed along the way — even the marketing collateral, photos and copies of checks — into a final “Completed Transaction” document for long-term digital storage.

It will be searchable, too, meaning you can access historic transaction data when needed.

The close

I know a lot of people remain unconvinced of the nutritional benefits electronic document management can have on the health of your real estate practice. We’re still scarfing down on paper. At \$14.99 per month for the Individual Pro subscription, I’d like to think Acrobat DC may alter the mindset of those still wondering why their buyers’ faxed offers aren’t getting prompt responses.

It’s not the final step in this long transition to digital real estate transactions, but I believe Acrobat DC will get more people comfortable with digital signatures, and that’s one of the hardest ideas to swallow.

Do you use Adobe Acrobat DC? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

RIGNITE

TECHNOLOGY

Rignite focuses on marketing to light up agents' online presence

A social media tool that could make a big difference for any real estate professional



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 14, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

When I talk about tech that helps real estate agents manage social media, the discussion doesn't veer far from the benefits of posting to multiple accounts from a single dashboard.

Hooray for convenience.

To truly leverage social media, you need to do more than share pictures of people jumping “Anchorman”-style in front of their pad. (FYI, this is not at all funny anymore. Even ironically.)

Agents need to provide content and methods of engagement that will pull in the clicks and browser time of people on the fence about buying, or people about to contact the agent who outspent you to appear next to the Zillow page for your listing. By using a well-orchestrated social media marketing plan, I think agents can match mettle with the confounding, ethically vague tactics marring Internet real estate marketing.

The sale

Rignite (rig night) is Web software that focuses first on proactive online outreach, using easy-to-build-and-manage contests and promotions to pull in new brand devotees. It’s so much more than a sharing and scheduling tool. Using Rignite, you can build a Facebook campaign with definitive, trackable goals.

The software cleanly maps you from one step to the next, providing metric benchmarks and analytics as you go. Using Rignite’s Campaign tool, its most compelling argument for adoption, agents can build an entire social media plan around a single listing. Name the campaign (use the property description), create some content and posting parameters, then choose a run time.

The screenshot displays the Rignite software interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Rignite logo, a search bar, and user information. Below this is a sidebar with various icons for navigation. The main area is titled 'Compose Schedule' and features a calendar grid for scheduling posts. A 'Scheduled Message' popup is visible, showing a message scheduled for April 15, 2015, at 11:30 AM. The message content includes a link to a contest and a hashtag. The calendar grid shows various scheduled posts for different days and times, with a 'Campaign: Blog - Follow the Winners: Great Twitte...' visible at the bottom.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri	Sat
7:30 RigniteInc	7:45 Rignite	7:30 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	9:15 RigniteInc
9:00 CL Services	7:50 RigniteInc	8:00 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	16:00 RigniteInc
9:10 CL Services	8:00 RigniteInc	8:15 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	16:15 RigniteInc
11:15 RigniteInc	11:15 RigniteInc	9:15 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	13:45 RigniteInc	16:30 RigniteInc
12:15 RigniteInc	11:27 CL Services	10:45 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	14:00 RigniteInc	
15:45 RigniteInc	14:00 RigniteInc	13:45 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	14:30 RigniteInc	
	14:15 RigniteInc	13:45 RigniteInc	RigniteInc	14:30 RigniteInc	
	15:15 RigniteInc	15:15 RigniteInc	11:30 RigniteInc	15:45 RigniteInc	
	17:15 RigniteInc	17:15 RigniteInc	11:30 RigniteInc	16:40 RigniteInc	
	18:00 RigniteInc	18:45 RigniteInc	11:45 RigniteInc	16:45 RigniteInc	
			23:15 RigniteInc		
8:00 RigniteInc	8:00 RigniteInc	9:15 RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	7:50 RigniteInc	11:30 RigniteInc
6:15 RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	9:45 RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	8:15 RigniteInc	16:30 RigniteInc
9:15 RigniteInc	14:30 RigniteInc	10:30 RigniteInc	12:45 RigniteInc	8:45 RigniteInc	19:00 RigniteInc
9:15 RigniteInc	15:15 RigniteInc	11:00 RigniteInc	13:15 RigniteInc	9:45 RigniteInc	19:30 RigniteInc
11:30 RigniteInc	16:45 RigniteInc	12:15 RigniteInc	14:30 RigniteInc	11:15 RigniteInc	21:15 RigniteInc

For example, maybe you'll use the average days on market as an end goal. You can do the same to promote open houses. You can deftly maneuver between Twitter and Facebook for each campaign, and Rignite granularly measures every click, retweet, share and mention. You can learn quickly which posts engage and which fall flat. Rignite's campaigns are also great for general branding beyond specific listings. Use them to offer discounts or incentives to remain in touch.

If you've ever run a Facebook contest, for example, you know how tedious it can be to manually sort through the entry posts to choose a winner. (Or even getting attention.) Rignite has a specific feature for creating and tracking contests, allowing you to rate entrants as they come in and send winners personal congratulations.

Schedule Filter

Group

Social Network

Twitter Facebook Google+ LinkedIn

Social Profile

Campaigns

Created By

Scheduled From To

All day

Keywords

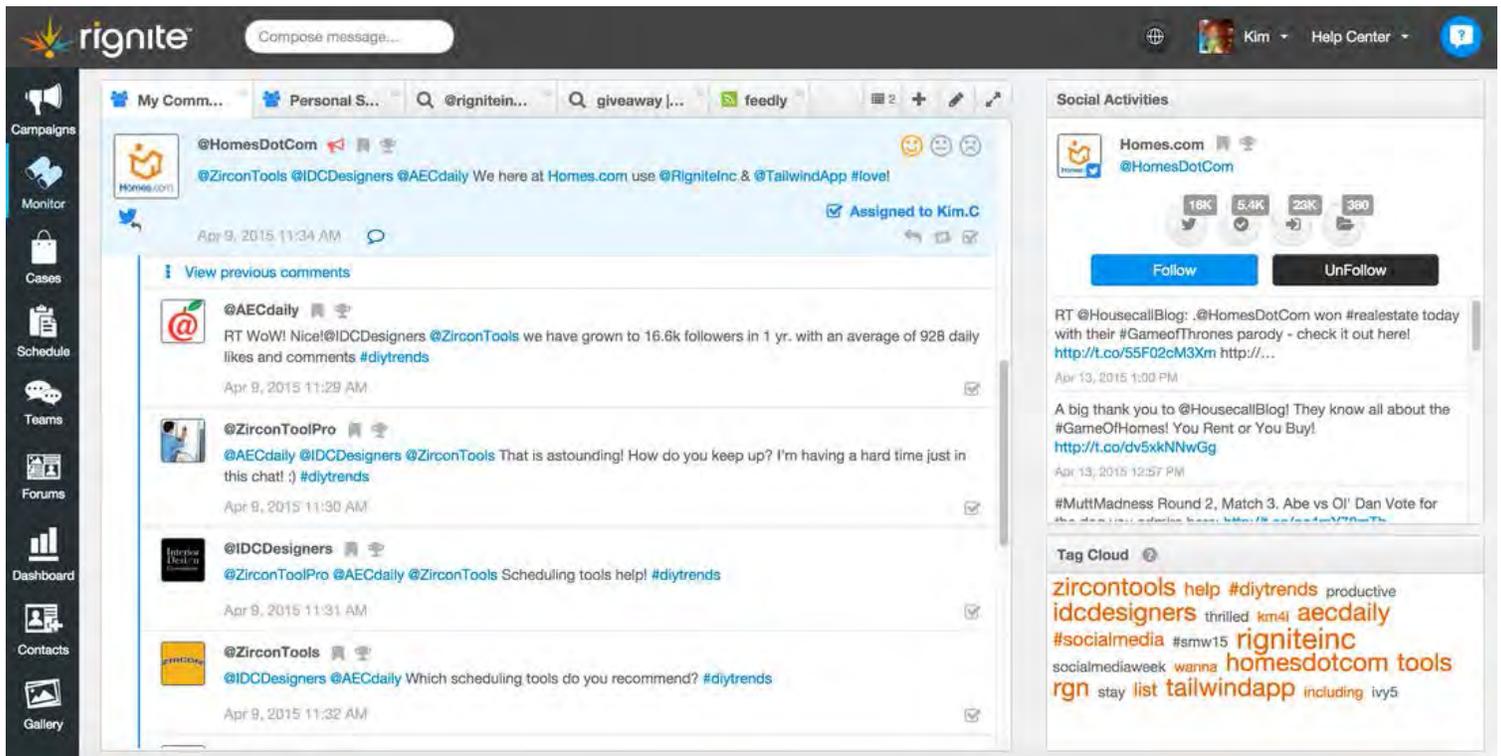
Post ID

Clear Cancel Search

It's powerful stuff. I envision things like carpet cleanings — or gift cards to popular restaurants close to a higher-priced listing — being used to stack responses. Maybe you push slightly discounted commissions or \$250 off closing costs. Get creative. This is the stuff of effective social media.

When it comes to the nuts and bolts of usage, Rignite has its interface dialed in. The iconography is rich and intuitive, and you can sort through an array of social media streams

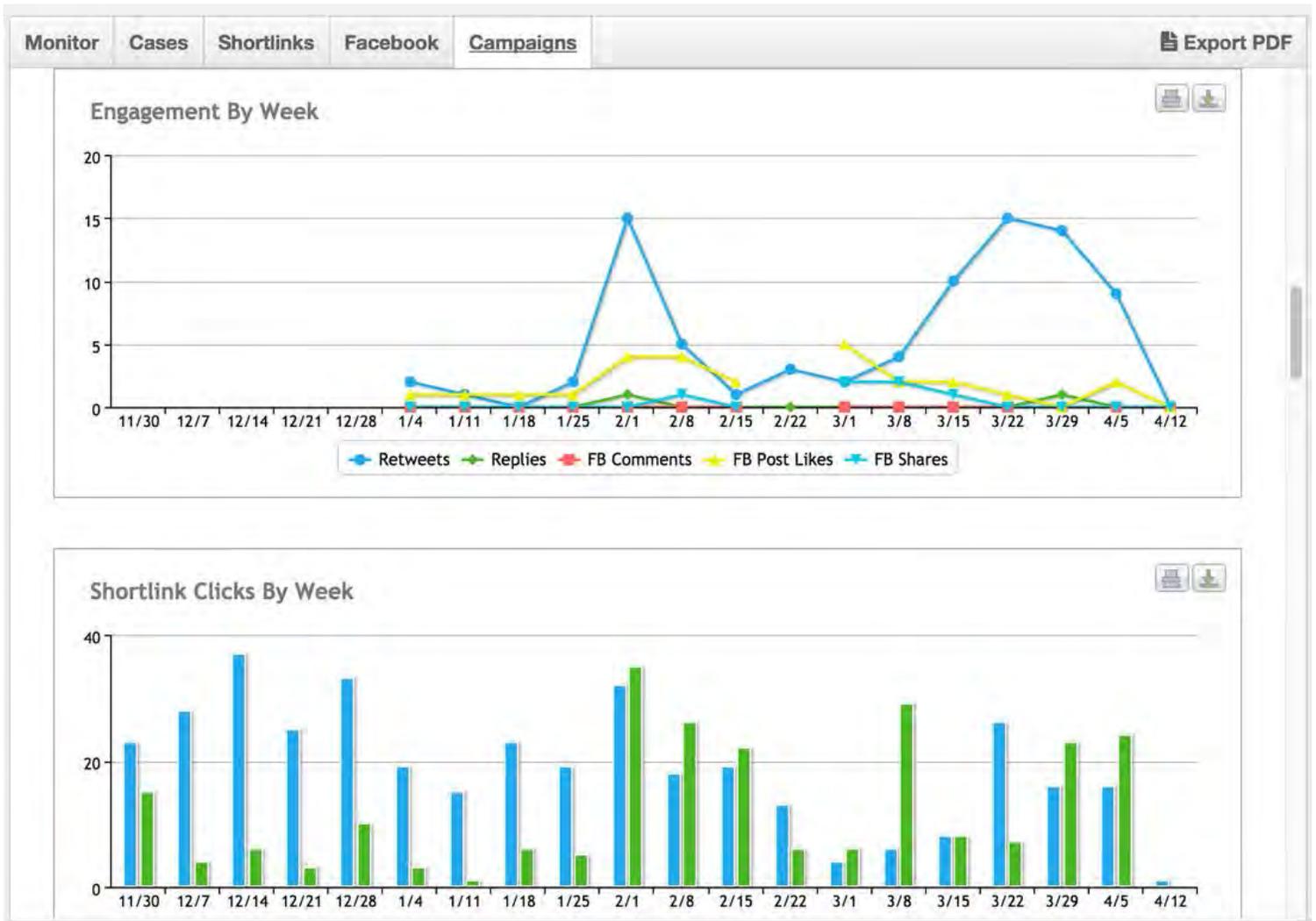
with visual ease. “My Communities” is your up-to-the-minute look, allowing you to respond quickly to clients and followers. Streams can be customized by your campaign, hashtags or profiles, or by a Watch List to monitor specific influencers. (Inman comes to mind.) Read and react.



Another standout in the Rignite feature set is “case assignments.” This is meant to allow team members to assign social media engagement tasks to one another. For example, Betty can be requested to respond to a Facebook question about her post. Ed can be assigned his “case” to retweet something nice his client said about the company.

Team leaders can create templates for specific kinds of posts, which are super handy if a particular property always gets the same question, such as “Is it true a school is being built in this neighborhood?”

Campaign reports are viewable through the quickly scannable Dashboard view. Everything you need to track can be seen, measured and exported, a great way to keep clients up-to-date on your marketing progress. You can also use the Gallery tool to store common image themes or property photos during a listing run, or for contests and employee headshots.



The Calendar view may be where one ends up spending a good amount of time logged in to Rignite. All of your campaigns can be spread before you, weeks at a time. Hovering over a post icon brings up all that post's vitals, and you can still edit it if needed. If you notice a couple of days are post-heavy, simply drag and drop to another day. Easy.

The software's real value isn't in its ones and zeros; it's in its ability to walk nonmarketing experts through inherently complicated online marketing campaign management and measuring efforts.

The close

Rignite makes reactive and proactive social media marketing quick and compelling. This is a true marketer's tool. I don't think there's any overkill here, no fatty features or excess interface.

This suite of social media marketing prowess will best meet the needs of larger teams, simply by the nature of its collaboration tools. Also, the midtier package at \$49.99 per user-month is the price point at which Campaigns can be used; and that's what you want.

For real estate companies that want to effectively traverse the online media landscape, and have a structure that can internally support a uniform marketing strategy, Rignite can really make your brand be heard among the din of those who just click and share.

Do you use Rignite? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

NEKST

TECH & GADGETS

Nekst is out to prove that not everything needs to be a CRM to make you better at business

Manage the bits and pieces of your day with this innovative app



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 15, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)

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The pitch

Real estate agents should put more weight on the word “transaction.” It’s so much more than a euphemism for “sale.”

Think of a transaction as any exchange of information. A handshake. A handing over of documents. An email conversation. How does each party benefit? What did you transact over coffee this morning?

Every promise made to complete a task or call someone is a transaction. If you’re late or forget, you failed the transaction.

When you think of transactions in this more esoteric sense, you can get a better grasp of how important each interaction with a client is to the end goal of helping them buy or sell.

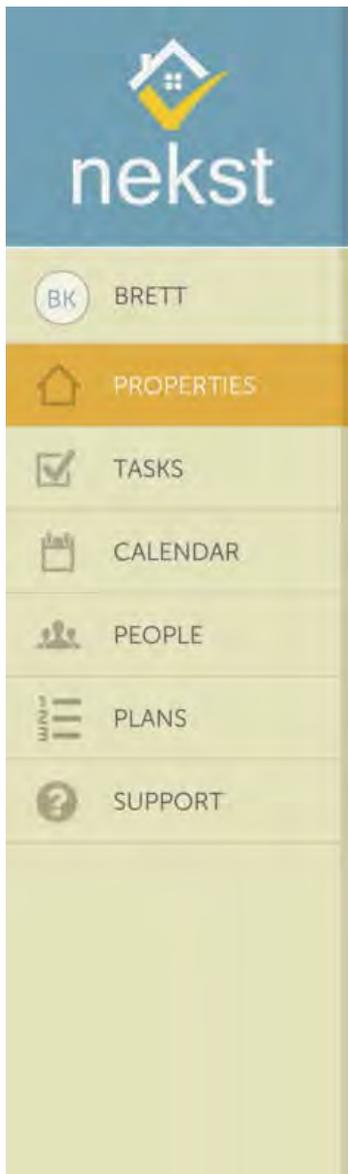
This is why I think software like [Nekst](#) (next) can be valuable to agents. It facilitates transactions beyond paperwork, and it streamlines the post-document processes.

The sale

Nekst is not a CRM (customer relationship manager). And its founder, real estate agent Brett Keppler, is happy to tell you that. If it’s one thing CRMs try to be, it’s all things to all people. Keppler wants Nekst to help agents be better managers of their business. And for it to be fun to use.

I call Nekst a true transaction management tool because it forces agents to think about the information and the process, not the paperwork. It aims to help organize and connect all the minor, nonfinancial transactions that drive real estate sales, the daily tasks busy agents try to manage mentally, instead of actually.

Nekst is driven by a series of Plans, or a set of tasks. Each type of Plan is assigned to a Property, which is where the user experience begins. Creating a new Property is easy — a few fields of basic information and you’re off.



1234 Inman Dr PENDING

TODAY'S TASKS (0) PAST DUE (0) TOMORROW (1) FULL CHECKLIST

KEY DATES

+ ADD A TASK

Apr 15 Collect Mortgage Quotes For Loan

Collect Mortgage Quotes for Loan

04/15/2015

Time (optional)

Key Date? Private?

When shopping for a mortgage, I recommend you compare mortgage quotes from different mortgage lenders to find the best option for your budget. The best way to identify which loans you should focus on will be to find out your credit score and determine the approximate down payment that you can afford. The answer to these two questions will narrow down your options to...

Transaction Parties

Assigned Visible

Buyer

Seller

Brett Keppler (Nekst CEO)

Craig Rowe

UPDATE TASK

CANCEL

REMOVE

Plans come into play after documents have been signed, in the stage of inactivity between listing agreement and the first open house, or between the accepted offer and closing.

When you launch a Plan, it's defined by begin and end dates that correspond with the contract. For example, from day of contract execution to expected date of closing. (Granted, closings often shift.)

Each task with the plan is then predicated on that window of time.

The screenshot shows the Nekst web application interface for Brett Keppler (Nekst CEO) on April 14th, 2015. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Header:** Displays the date "April 14th, 2015" and the user's name "Brett Keppler (Nekst CEO)".
- Navigation:** A sidebar on the left contains icons and labels for "PROPERTIES", "TASKS", "CALENDAR", "PEOPLE", "PLANS", and "SUPPORT".
- Task List:** A central area titled "KEY DATES" shows a list of tasks for the day, each with a checkbox and a due date of "Apr 14". Tasks include:
 - Ensure Buyer Is Cooperating With Lender (444 Penn Ln)
 - Schedule Home Inspection (1234 Inman Dr)
 - Turn Off Prospecting Emails (1234 Inman Dr)
 - Contact Loan Officer For Loan/Appraisal Status (222 Syberry Ln)
 - Submit Repair/Credit Request From Inspection To Seller (222 Syberry Ln)
 - Communicate HOA Documents Satisfaction (444 Penn Ln)
 - Turn In All Contract Paperwork To Office (1234 Inman Dr)
 - Turn Off Prospecting Emails (555 J.J. Lane)
 - Deposit Escrow/Earnest Money (777 Teanireo Ln)
 - Email Complete Document Package To All Parties (777 Teanireo Ln)
 - Provide HOA Documentation To Buyer (777 Teanireo Ln)
- Filter List:** A "FILTER LIST" on the right allows filtering tasks by "ASSIGNMENT" (Assigned to You, Assigned to Buyer, Assigned to Seller) and "SIDE" (Buyer, Seller).

The free version of Nekst comes with a few standard Plans, but when you pay \$15 per month, you can create as many Plans as you like. Your “Prelisting Plan” would outline a series of tasks needed to be completed around that process. You can assign tasks to your clients as well, which is where the value of interaction benefits the process.

“Closing Plan” would be another. You can even bifurcate this plan into one for a financed purchase and one for a cash buyer.

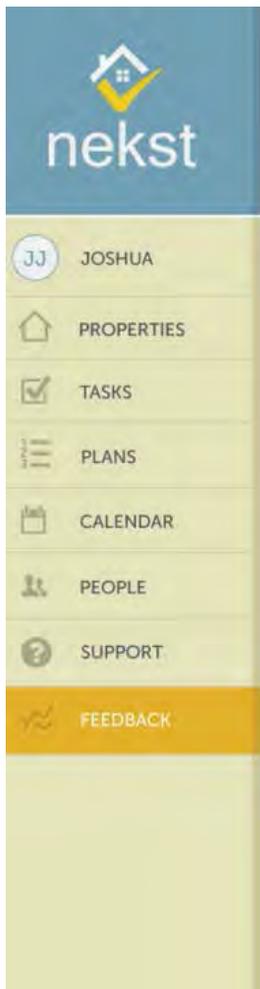
Agents can embed their customers into the sale by assigning them tasks, too. This helps build rapport and maintain accountability. You can limit what Tasks your clients see, of course, as well as what they can edit or delete. The agent remains in charge.



A nice feature of Nekst is that its tasks are explained cleanly to clients with an explanation of what, why and when. It will explain why an inspection is important, what it's role is in the sale, and what the seller can expect when an inspector visits. It comes to them via email invitation. There is no cost for clients to tackle their chores.

The Nekst interface is quite friendly. Color coding helps you navigate across a top row of buttons sorting task importance. Each instance of user experience is well-balanced, nothing is hidden. This should ease the already moderate learning curve.

There's a calendar view that heavy planners will enjoy. It stacks task icons on each day one is due. It's a nice overall summary of your activity. Probably overwhelming for some.



Joshua Johnson

1 MONTH 3 MONTH 1 YEAR ALL TIME

Date of First Property
September 7th, 2013

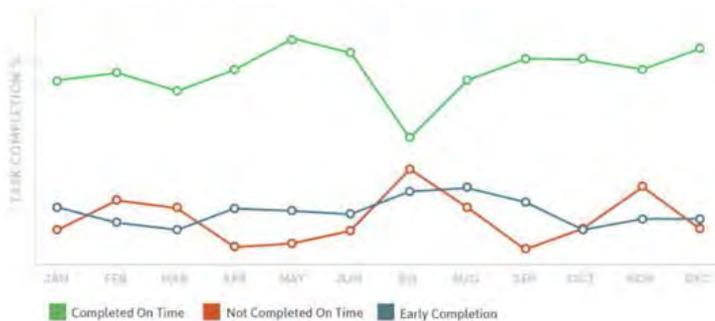
Total Properties
25 properties

78% TASKS
Completed On Time 156 Tasks

12% TASKS
Completed Early 24 Tasks

7% TASKS
Not Completed On Time 14 Tasks

3% TASKS
Moved To A Later Date 6 Tasks



A couple of future upgrades include a “self-grading” chart of sorts, where your efficacy at completing tasks will be presented in a number of visual variables, and you’ll even have a letter grade. Don’t be the agent with a C+.

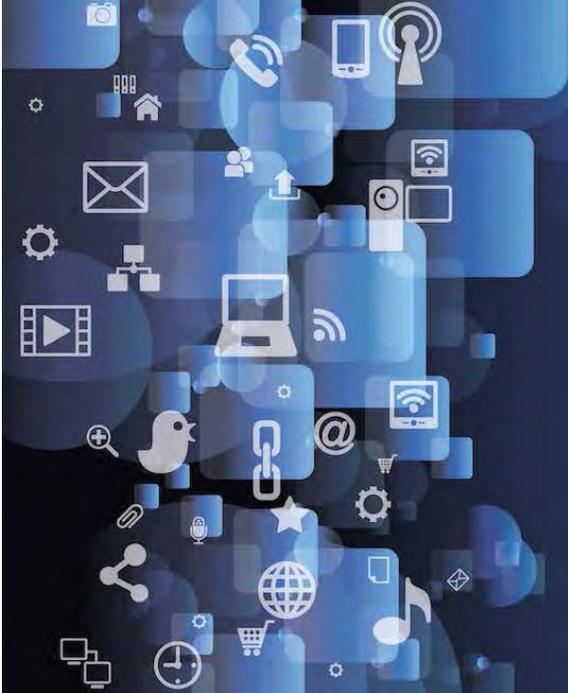
This feature will also use “gamification” tactics in the form of colorful animal badges that evolve in environmental sophistication as your plans reach fruition. Nothing wrong with a little fun in our productivity software, right?

The close

I think Nekst is worth checking out. It’s what you use after your CRM has won you a customer. At \$15 per user per month, it’ll cost you less than a couple of decaf mocha latte something-or-others. Let it take over what you’re always scrambling around to finish.

Again, think above the paperwork, in between the pages. Don’t let the stack of stapled pulp on your car seat be the reminder you need to follow up with the lender, or verify the cost of the banister repair. Be proactive.

Have a plan.



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

WEBSITEBOX

TECHNOLOGY

WebsiteBox: affordable website builder or half-hearted CRM? Maybe neither

There are pros and cons to this popular tool



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 16, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

I've made it no secret that I believe agents should invest in a more comprehensive Web presence than the template-driven banality provided by their franchise.

Notice I said "invest in," not buy. Tremendous difference.

However, I understand that not many agents are ready to push \$5,000 or more into a customized site. I get it. But I can still argue all day about why one should. And I will, using [WebsiteBox](#) as my platform.

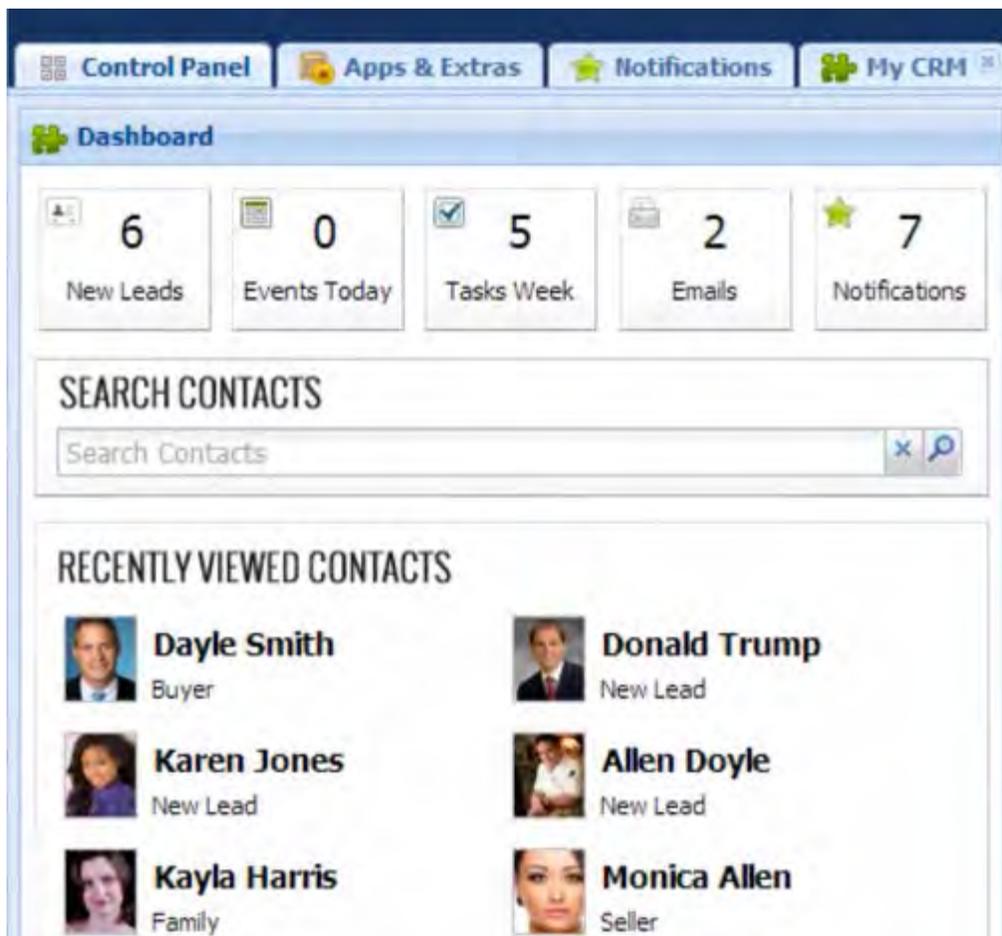
The sale

I like [Placester](#). I think it's a good tool for building a solid, compelling website. Plus, it's highly affordable.

At \$99, so is WebsiteBox.

Placester connects to your local MLS easily, and [WebsiteBox just announced data relationships with 300 MLSs](#) here and in Canada.

But what Placester doesn't do is try to be your CRM (customer relationship manager). Because you shouldn't buy a CRM for \$10 per month. Nor should you buy one for \$99, which is what WebsiteBox also offers.

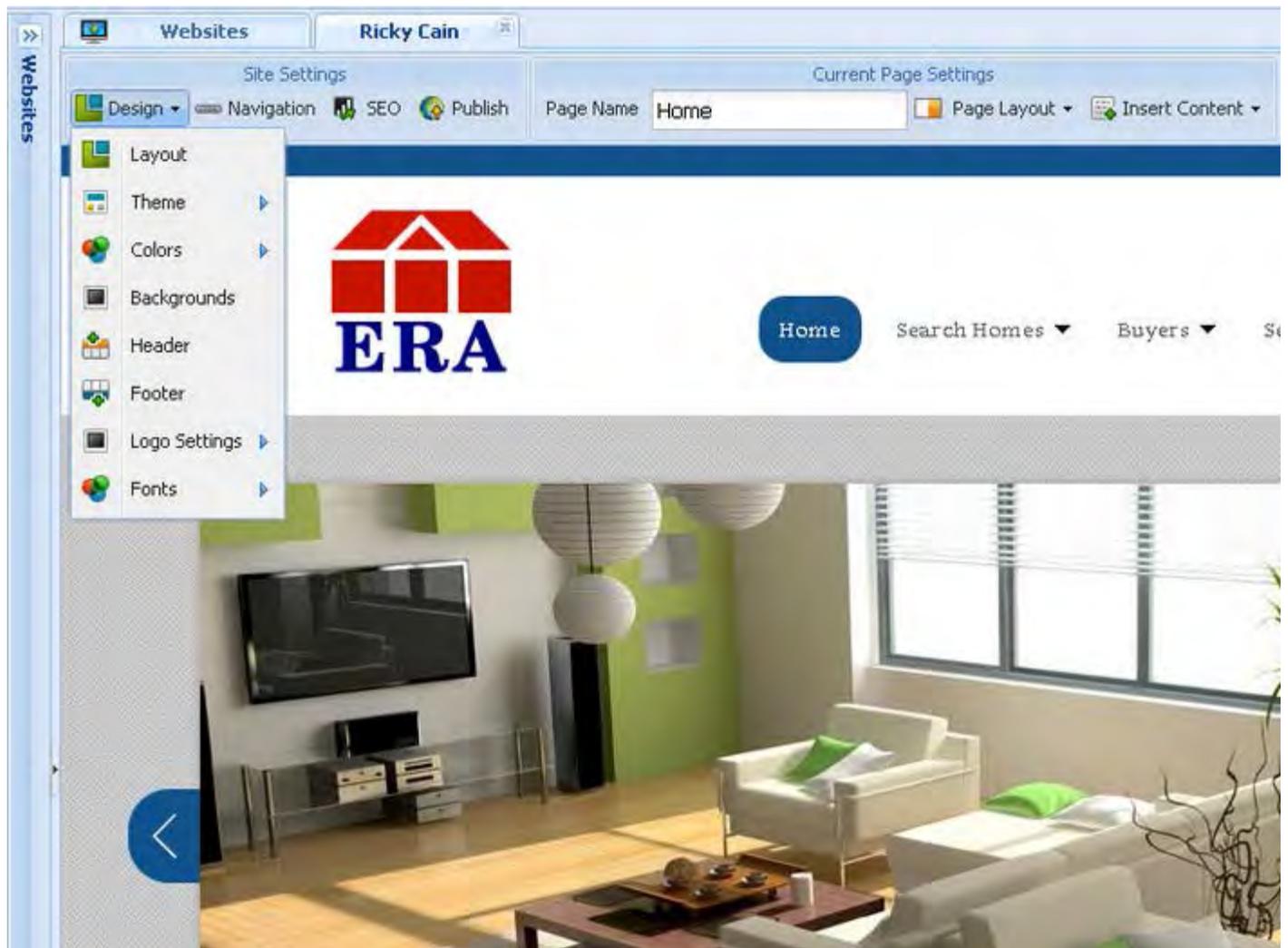


WebsiteBox's building tools are very robust, and if you can manage to grimace your way through the very Windows 95 (maybe XP?) interface, I have no doubt an agent can build a functional, good-looking website. You can alter layouts easily with simple drop-down menus, add front-page banner sliders, embed Vimeo videos and adjust color schemes. WebsiteBox makes site customization very easy.

Too easy.

I would caution agent-designers to not overdo your site with visual clutter. Technology can often give us too much power over something. That's what's happening here.

I would be higher on WebsiteBox if its design tools (its base templates are fine, if not ordinary) limited users to only fonts that would look good in specific templates, or required the use of only a select number of color combinations. Your options for both are many.



The visual ergonomics of a website are absolutely crucial to its usability and purpose. Apps and mobile device usage continue to push the demand for carefully designed interfaces; everything from finger reach to how we hold a device is factored into information design. A good real estate website is about so much more than connecting to an IDX (Internet data exchange).

Still, there's nothing to say an agent can't hand over their WebsiteBox account to an experienced designer. Maybe for another \$2,000 you can have the best-looking WebsiteBox website out there.

I also strongly suggest hiring a copywriter.

WebsiteBox's included content — which you can edit — offers a Web copy tactic that is dangerously close to keyword-stuffing. In one sample, it repeats the regional markets in which the agent sells several times within a couple of paragraphs. This all but ignores the 2011 Google algorithm update Panda, which stressed ranking sites with high-quality expert content, de-emphasizing keywords.

Using some highly specific, repetitive phrases that combine “real estate” and “your market” do nothing for SEO (search engine optimization), and even less for your reader. Yes, Google knows good writing from bland, mass-produced copy. Write original, brand-building copy.

I would like to welcome you to my comprehensive Austin, Georgetown, Buda, Driftwood, Hutto, Manor, Bee Cave, and Weser real estate website. No other site provides more detailed Austin, Georgetown, Buda, Driftwood, Hutto, Manor, Bee Cave, and Weser real estate market information than you'll find here.

For buyers there is detailed area and neighborhood information and a great MLS® search page. For sellers I provide information and data to help you to ready your home for market and to list it so it sells.

For Buyers



For Sellers



The Austin, Georgetown, Buda, Driftwood, Hutto, Manor, Bee Cave, and Weser real estate market is made up of diverse and interesting communities and neighborhoods. I'll tell you about each of them and let you narrow your search to the very best for you.

WebsiteBox does offer more than a website builder. Once in your account's Control Panel, you can navigate very much like you would in Windows Explorer. Everything is easy to get to, but square and clinical.

This is where you can access the CRM Dashboard that helps you manage contacts, emails, tasks, documents and a calendar. But, is that really a customer relationship management tool?

Can I be given automated alerts about when to follow up? How about the quality of the website leads; is there a way to measure that? Can I build transaction-specific email templates? Are my leads tracked on social media?

I'd also be worried about CRM data relative to my website being hacked, which happens even to the largest, most well-protected sites.

My biggest issues with CRMs is when they try to do too much. I shouldn't have the same problem with my website content management software.

WebsiteBox also upsells annual Premium Phone Support packages for \$99. A basic website builder shouldn't require the level of phone support that would justify the expense. But a CRM might.

There are some features I like about WebsiteBox, such as its agent roster pages. These are available to those with Team and Office accounts, not single agent sites. These can be used as landing pages on listing ads and help communicate brand. Its team interaction tools within its back end are useful as well. Agents can discuss site changes, monitor who changed what, and tell each other to update their listings.

The close

I think there are better options out there than WebsiteBox. It works for a lot of agents, and its model is proven. I really think it's trying too hard, and ignoring the value of carefully processed, user-tested website design, as well as what it takes to actually program for a true SEO strategy. A widget won't cut it.

Back to my earlier point about technology granting us too much power, I'm reminded of the scene in "Jurassic Park," in which Dr. Malcolm says to John Hammond, " ... Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could that they didn't stop to think if they should."

I get it, though; new agencies may need a site done quickly. WebsiteBox's results look professional; it's pretty easy and obviously affordable. Connect the IDX, upload some headshots and publish. That can work.

Of course, you're only a new agency for so long.

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Do you use WebsiteBox? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

STUDEO

TECHNOLOGY

Studeo combines artistry and Web savvy to make listings and agents shine

When it comes to software, form should equal function



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 17, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

When it comes to buying real estate marketing software, it's hard to find something that favors compelling design over efficiency. The rather hectic, variable nature of real estate sales tends to ensure efficiency wins out.

From website design tools to brochure production, most tools also try to shoehorn sales integration and embed contacts. There's value in that, but there's more value in showcasing your listings, and yourself, in a package that's artfully presented and uniquely creative. And also easy.

Have you heard of [Studeo](#)?

The sale

Studeo is a Toronto company that diligently walks the line between traditional graphic design and digital art. And the company has drawn that line right through the real estate industry.

The overall concept is simple: Studeo creates great-looking online presentations for property listings. A rudimentary comparison, but when you click on a Studeo listing, it presents in a browser like a PDF. However, this is much, much more.

The interface is simple and Apple-like. You just drag and drop files into predetermined panels on the pages. You can select an array of layout types, from two-page brochures to expansive catalog-like spreads.

Studeo limits user edits to just images and text. This way, no errant color combinations or absurd font choices end up in your presentation. But a lot of other very cool stuff can.



Multipage digital brochures from Studeo can embed an array of content types. You can drag and drop Vimeo or YouTube videos, panoramic home tours, high-end photography, cinemagraphs (still photos with instances of motion), and even [Matterport](#) footage.

If you subtly combine multiple media types, like a video introducing the property, followed by some instances of panoramas or short slideshows, a property can really tell a story. Because of its intrinsic page layouts and fetching graphics, just using Studeo makes you feel like an ad exec.

studeo 3-4-15

Gourmet Kitchen

FABULOUS FOR ENTERTAINING!





Main Floor Office

- 5' ceiling
- Strip hardwood floor
- Pot lights

Dining Room

- 9' ceilings
- Strip hardwood floor
- Crown moulding

- Decorative columns
- Picture window
- Pot lights

Family Room

- 9' ceilings
- Strip hardwood floor
- Gas fireplace
- Decorative columns
- Pot lights

Kitchen

- 9' ceilings
- Open concept
- Granite counters & backplash
- Centre island

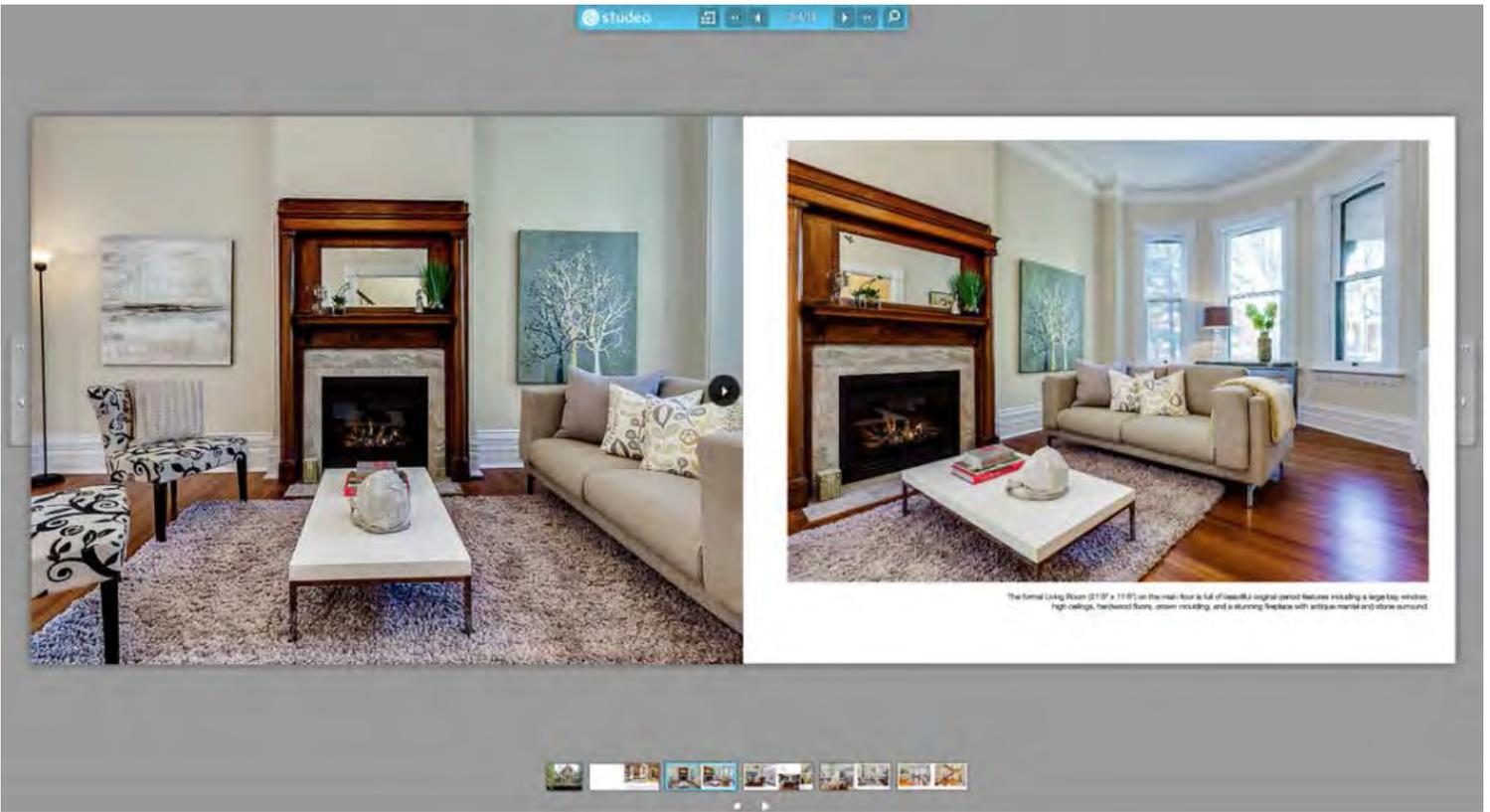
- Double garden doors to back deck with awning
- Pendant (and pot) lighting
- 18" travertine tile floor

107 Arrowwood Road | Mississauga, ON | 107 Arrowwood Road | Mississauga, ON

Final products can be shared just like any Web link, MLS (multiple listing service) accounts, emailed and favorited. Viewers can zoom in and out, navigate pages and share it socially, on any device.

The idea here is to paint a property with a proper face for the market. Studeo encourages viewer interaction with dynamic media, not iPhone captures in bad lighting.

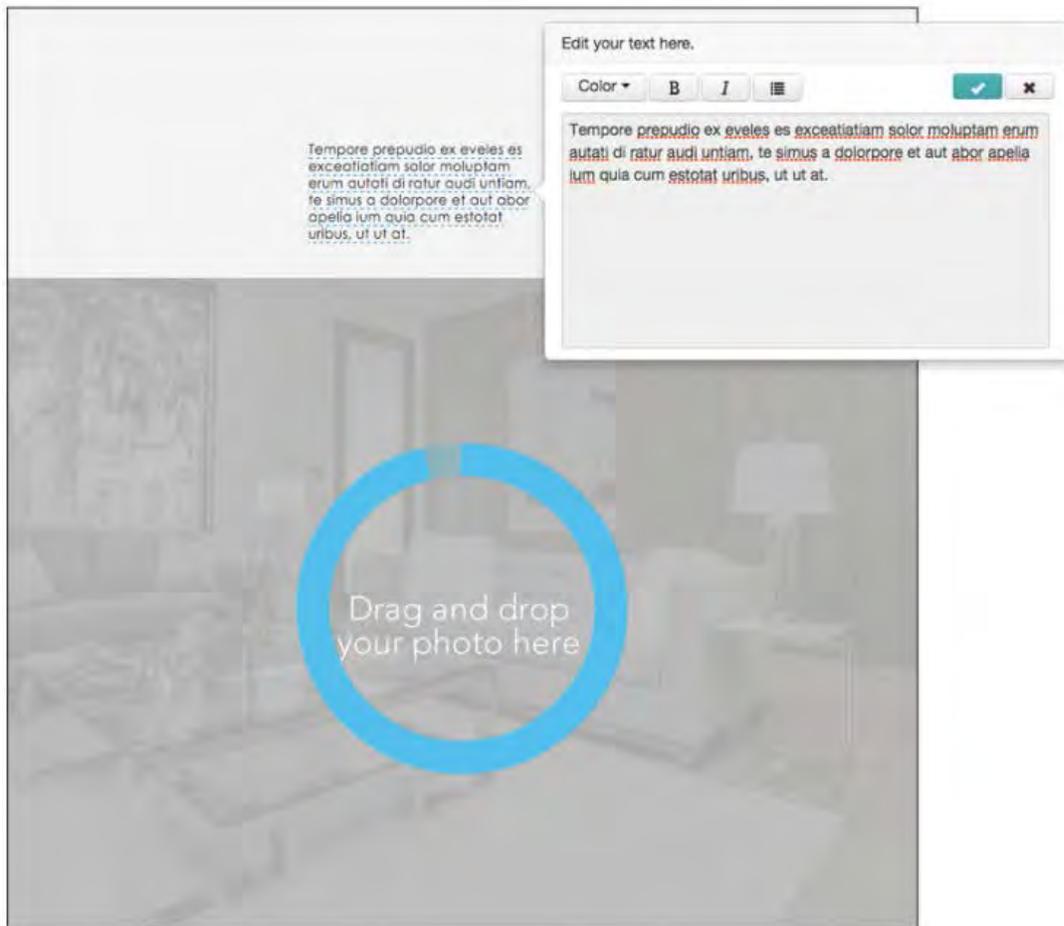
To further the brand of the home, Studeo offers custom domains or subdomains on which to host your listing.



Studeo's own reporting has shown that viewers are spending from four to 15 minutes viewing their agents' productions. That's impressive, even if it is their findings.

There's a mechanism to measure, among other stats, time spent on a specific page, clicks on panoramic images, and general time engaged.

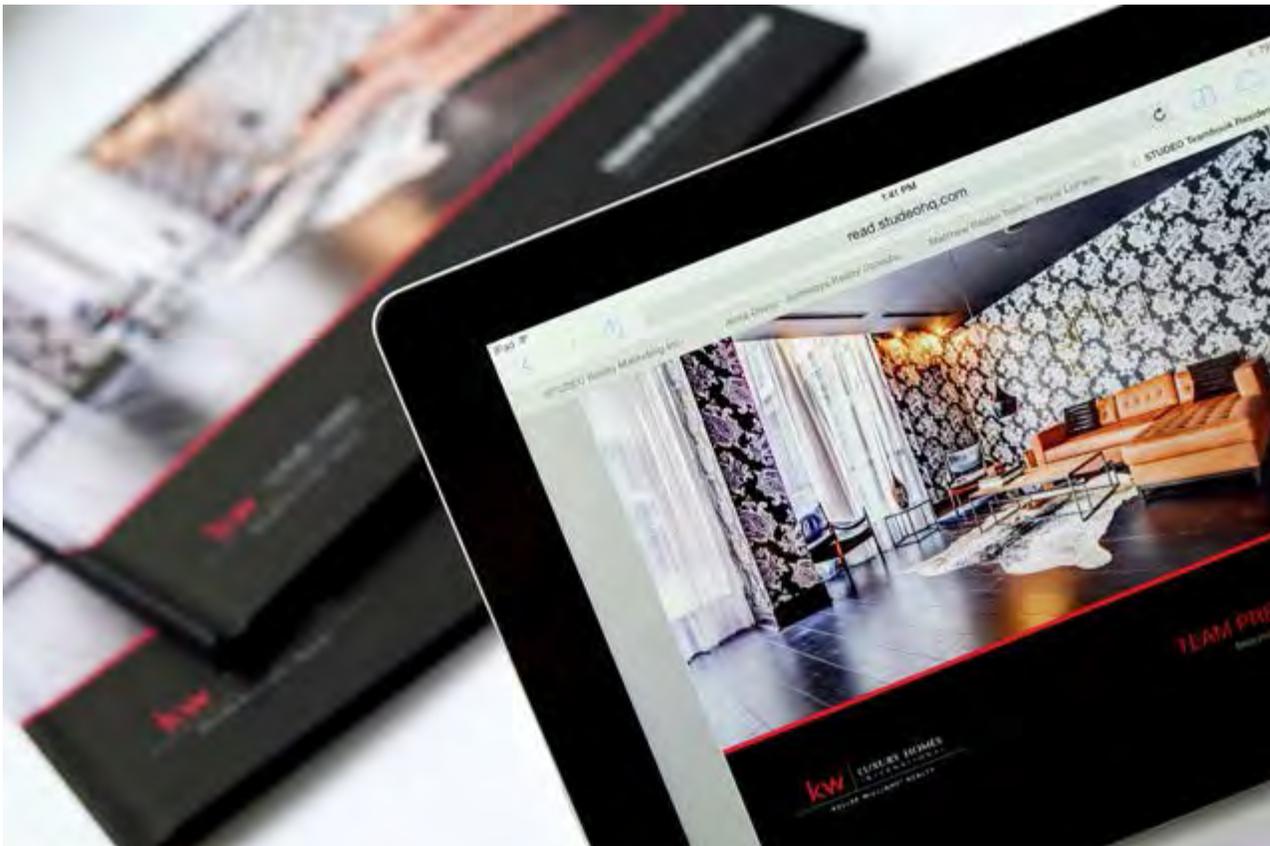
There's a luxury property feel to this product. You can use it to create affordable, very well-done collateral for more typical listings, I feel that the luxury sales agent who leverages Studeo can really make their clients look good.



Studeo allows users to order print copies of digital brochures. They can turn around full-color bifolds, trifolds and booklets in two to three days.

For the high-dollar listings, you can order a multipage hard cover “Pitch Book” of your presentation. Essentially, a coffee table book of your listing. Costs get to around \$1,299 for 25 of these showcase books. But they would look great on the dining room sideboard in your next million-dollar listing.

To ensure the print quality matches the online, Studeo partnered with service bureaus that house Indigo printers, absurdly high-end digital printers that can offer production quality on par with traditional offset presses.



Studeo Hub is an embedded listing page for your brokerage website. In addition to displaying your Studeo properties, you can embed videos, social media links and related marketing content.

The company offers an Enterprise edition that caters to larger, collaborative teams. A proprietary iteration of the software is locked in to a company's brand identity to ensure agents are always looking their best.

Another great use of Studeo is to create personal brochures and listing presentations. Embed videos of yourself, images of properties sold, and showcase services in the very medium you'll use to sell their home. Get creative.

The close

It's no secret by now that I believe form should be equal to function when it comes to software. Why? Because it has to be used first, and visual bias emerges quickly and impacts adoption. Studeo tightly binds design house-quality imagery with contemporary, shareable Internet media.

Pricing varies greatly and uses a credit system, like a lot of stock photography services. The lowest digital-only plan is \$119; the most expensive is \$1,299, which provides all digital formats and 25 hardcover Pitch books. There's an array of budget options.

If you're serious about showcasing your listings and getting prospective buyers to engage before ever setting foot in the foyer, Studeo is definitely worth considering.

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Do you use Studeo? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

CHARLIE

TECHNOLOGY

Charlie is an inventive assistance tool that feeds client profiles to busy agents

Get the skinny on your daily meetings before you head out the door



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 20, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

Everyone Googles themselves occasionally.

No? You might want to. Saturday night was only a couple of days ago.

We also search the Web and social media for beta about listing or buyer prospects. It's only natural, plus business-smart, to want to know a few things about potential business partners, or an agent to whom you'll send a referral.

Perhaps you have an old employer in common, or your kids go to the same school. Or you both enjoy mountain biking.

Everyone wants an edge before going into a meeting, so why risk being unprepared?

Anyway, speaking of getting to know people, I recently met a guy named [Charlie](#).

The sale

Charlie is a browser-based app (iOS version to launch soon) that combs your Google or Outlook calendar for meetings. When it finds one, it scans the Interwebs for information about the person you'll be seeing.

An hour or so before your meeting, it sends you a clean, one-page summary of everything it found out about the person whose lunch you're about to buy. For example, you might find out they're a gluten-free vegan, and maybe you know a place they might like.

The profile page, which also looks very nice on a mobile browser, starts with some pretty basic stuff, like a headshot with current title and place of employment, social media buttons and an array of connected information.

Upcoming Meetings

We'll send you insights on every attendee **one hour** before your meeting.

12:00 PM Charlie App | Quick Intro Call

Jasmine to call Brian

Brian Halligan
CEO at HubSpot

[View Insights](#)

2:00 PM Quarterly Account Review

Brian Chesky
Co-founder, CEO @ Airbnb

[View Insights](#)

Joe Gebbia

[View Insights](#)

You rock, here's a present!

REQUEST NEW
BRIEFING

Your Past Briefings



Steven Levy
DONE



Meg Whitman
DONE



Aaron Levine
DONE



Ryan Holmes
DONE



Brian Halligan
DONE



You may know the basics already, but maybe it's been two weeks since you scheduled the meeting. Plus, we're often thrown into meetings at the last minute, so even the basics can be valuable. However, Charlie's value is going way beyond the basics.

My Charlie profile opened up with my entire LinkedIn bio. I have no shame in admitting that if someone could find a way to connect with what I list in it, rock on, let's do business.

The profile then expounds on their Web-connected life, ranging from LinkedIn connections to Twitter follows to news stories.



Interests and Hobbies

Inferred by analyzing Ryan's tweets, followed accounts, and followers

Your Common Interests

Venture Capital Travel Celebrities Us Politics Entrepreneurship

Their Other Interests

Films Ecommerce Pay Per Click Marketing Advertising & Marketing Crm Software Casinos And Gambling



Common Connections

LinkedIn Connections

Ben Zlotnick Thomas Knoll

Twitter Connections

Dennis Crowley Reid Hoffman Steve Case



Social Updates

Why we need to get serious about working out ... at work: <http://t.co/9nq4QGwCWW> My thoughts for @FinancialPost
👍 a day ago 🔄 2 ⭐ 6

Why do Apple and Facebook suddenly want to handle your money? <http://t.co/H3z6aWOXa6> (Hint: \$40 billion a year)
👍 6 days ago 🔄 9 ⭐ 7

13 More

I understand that we don't always remember who were following on social media, so you see some of the commonalities as vague; still, if you can simply grab one quick nugget of shared insight, it could be all you need to engage the other side of the table and win the relationship.

Charlie can also come back with news mentions of your contact, articles and breakdowns about their company, and even competitors of their company. In Beta is a category called "The Skim," which skims Web feeds for "the biggest stories" mentioning your client or their company.

Ryan Hootsuite Media Inc.

-  **CEO at Hootsuite Media Inc.**
As described on their LinkedIn profile.
- Hootsuite is a social relationship platform that empowers users to execute social media strategies across their organizations.
 - Our vision is to revolutionize communications; our mission is to empower our customers to transform messages into meaningful relationships.
 - You can learn more about how we're doing this on our blog: blog.hootsuite.com and careers page: hootsuite.com/about/careers

-  **Other Positions**
- Advisor at [Wantering](#) (over 2 years)
 - Advisor at [Appboy](#) (3 years)
 - Board of Directors at [Payfirma](#) (10 months)
 - Board of Directors at [Invoke Media](#) (almost 5 years)
 - Founder & Chairman at Adreno Gear Ltd (over 22 years)

-  **Ryan in The News**
Blogs and news articles mentioning Ryan
- [Hootsuite Media Closes \\$60 Million Funding Round, 'Heading Toward' IPO](#)**
The Wall Street Journal - 20 days ago
Hootsuite Chief Executive **Ryan Holmes** said the deal came together quickly and was oversubscribed by \$10 million. He said the choice of the Boston-based asset manager as lead investor was tied to the company's public-market plans.
 - [Ryan Holmes, Hootsuite CEO, tries to keep things simple](#)**
CBC - 7 days ago
Ryan Holmes had a simple, wholesome start to life, growing up near Vernon, B.C., on a farm.
 - [Hootsuite Hits \\$250M in Total Funding With New Financing](#)**
Bloomberg - 8 days ago

Each section of information is nicely categorized; examples include, “Summary,” “Key Points,” “Interests & Hobbies” and “Headlines.”

Using and setting up the software is a breeze. Start with an email prompt login, let it know if you use Outlook Calendar or a Google Calendar, and you're off. Next steps involve connecting your social media accounts and choosing a few preferences.

I would highly suggest opting for the “morning daily update” in your preferences. Charlie will send you a rundown of each appointment that day along with a completed profile of each individual you'll be meeting. Sharp.

Good morning, Aaron - you have 2 meetings this Fri, Oct 17

Inbox x



Charlie <charlie@charlieapp.com>

7:05 AM (3 hours ago)

to me

Hey Aaron,

The Titanic crew would've known about the iceberg if they had Charlie back then... Just sayin...

Here are your briefings for today:

9:00 am [Suzanne + Aaron](#)

Briefings on [Suzanne Lucas](#)

9:20 am [FW: *9:20 am CDT: GLOBE Entrepreneurship Engagement Session](#)

Briefings on [Greg Becker](#), [Allison Hughes](#), [samer saab](#), and [Ted Zoller](#)

Cheers,

Charlie
Aaron Frazin's Assistant

Charlie's user interface is very clean, almost looking like its own social network. There are no confusing tabs or overly drawn-out sign-up requirements.

For real estate agents who are heavy CRM (customer relationship manager) users, Charlie could be a great friend. Since it lets you run manual profile searches not found on your calendar, search your hottest prospects and enter the pertinent data in your CRM. Now you have a comprehensive summary of them for the next time you call.

A CRM is nothing without its data, and Charlie can fill it for you.

The close

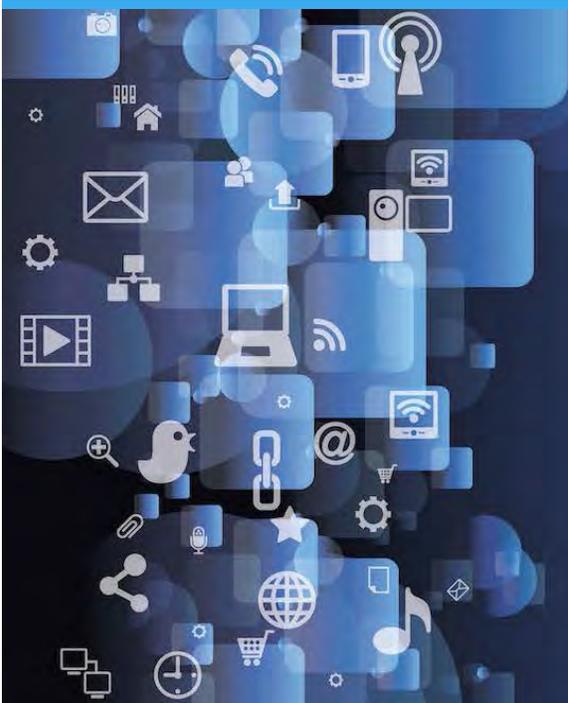
Charlie hasn't been around long. I only expect it to become more investigative, however. Let's not kid ourselves; we're not exactly spending less time on the Internet. The more we click, share and browse, the smarter Charlie becomes.

Charlie is free while it remains in beta. Expect team pricing in the not-too-distant future. Hop on now.

I think Charlie can really help busy agents.

Of course, he may already be helping their competition, because more than 25,000 sales executives are using it.

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THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

WINGWIRE

TECHNOLOGY

Website firm WingWire takes design and content creation out of the hands of agents — for good

Alleviate one burden forever with this tech tool



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 21, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

There's something to be said about affordable website solutions for real estate agents.

Of course, it all depends on how you define affordable.

I've worked on websites that cost \$20,000 — which is very affordable. I know paying six figures for a site isn't at all uncommon. Smart programming and design is that valuable.

I think a happy medium should exist. A middle ground between thrift store and capital investment, where differentiating design and engaging content are the selling points, but price doesn't make it out of reach.

Maybe [WingWire](#) is in that sweet spot.

The sale

WingWire isn't pitching a vague, esoteric business model or trying to blend multiple business functions into a website offering.

There is something unique about its approach though, which is why I thought it worthwhile to share with readers.

WingWire handles all the design and content for you. Forever. Or at least until you choose to move on from real estate.

That's right — there's no dashboard to learn, property galleries to build or free blocks of "SEO-ready" copy.

After a very reasonable \$999 design-stage fee, users pay \$199 per month to have WingWire write two blog posts per week, handle social media content, update all site content, manage listings and even send a regular email newsletter to your contact list.

700 Neptune Ave. Encinitas CA | Oceanfront Home For Sale by AARE

FEATURED LISTING

MODERN MASTERPIECE ON THE OCEANFRONT

Spectacular Contemporary Oceanfront Home situated on one of the most westerly lots on Neptune – a prime location that allows for unobstructed panoramic views. This is a home for those who love light. Expansive open spaces, vaulted ceilings, and wall-to-wall disappearing glass doors afford unparalleled opportunities to enjoy breathtaking ocean views from the comfort of your custom dream home.

This is a home for those who love light. Expansive open spaces, vaulted ceilings, and wall-to-wall disappearing glass doors afford unparalleled opportunities to enjoy breathtaking ocean views from the comfort of your custom dream home. Well-placed skylights add to that airy feeling both in the daytime and on moonlit nights. On cooler evenings, relax in the light from your Montigo r420 fireplace.

[Click here for 3D virtual tour](#)

The company adds listings via IDX (Internet data exchange) links, new agents, news, map searches, videos and any other form of content you think will empower your Web presence.

After working with you to determine needs, goals and branding elements, WingWire's designers and content managers translate your unique approach into a compelling website.

With a cadre of copywriters, designers and programmers, WingWire takes the most essential components of building a website out of your hands. And they never give it back.

When you need some copy updated, just email. An agent left your company? Let them know. A luxury listing assignment was secured? WingWire will build you a stand-alone mini-site to ensure it gets the attention it deserves.

FEATURED PROPERTY



Their team of writers create new blog posts every Monday and Thursday, and they'll send regular Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter posts for you, too. Even if you're already adept on those fronts, WingWire's assistance will suitably supplement your efforts.

The blog content is consistent and well-written, but not overly captivating. It's rather run-of-the-mill actually, with a lot of "Top 5 Ways To ..." lists. Granted, that's what gets shared today. If you have market insights and compelling content ideas for blog posts, send them their way.

SELL

Our innovative brand offers global reach, outstanding local brand profile and leading-edge technology when marketing your exceptional property. Our luxury specialists will provide you with extensive mix of online and offline media options that offer comprehensive distribution to a worldwide audience.

FOR MARKETING AND LUXURY PROPERTY THERE'S SIMPLY NO BETTER.

Each device-responsive site is created for you, based on designs and trends you like, that you feel represent what you want prospects to think about your team. There's not a template catalog to choose from.

Looking at some client site samples, it's safe to say there are some recurring visual trends among the sites, but that's often a representation of what the client wants. If you think WingWire is for you, push them. [Search the Web](#) for unique designs and make yours stand out.

However, I also looked at several of their clients' sites on my iPhone 5, and they responded really well to the Safari app, and they loaded quickly. A home search on mobile performed nicely, returning a bold property image, the price, address and a quick description. No doubt, this base is covered.

MY WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Sign up

LATEST UPDATES

6 Ways to Stage Your Home on a Tight Budget

3 Small Changes That Can Add Extra Storage to Your Back Yard

True or False? 5 Fallacies About Mortgages You Should Know About

4 Great Ideas to Add Storage to Small Laundry Rooms

4 Reasons to Cut Your Home Insurance Company Off

Remember, customers are watching, and doing so through more device windows than ever before. Websites are visited and left every day for an array of reasons. It's critical that agents always be looking to reduce the number of reasons a visitor may leave your site. Find those exit pages and patch the holes.

WingWire works to stay in front of Web usability trends, so as fluctuations in user engagement occur, they work to fix it. They'll provide ongoing design upgrades as tools and trends change.

The close

On the Web, perusing prospective real estate agents is just like browsing a rack of magazines in the airport newsstand; what cover will win your attention? What's just trashy, time-sucking content for the sake of earning your flight delay time and what's actually going to make it on the plane?

Although only 30 days live, the team behind WingWire has been in and around real estate marketing on many different fronts for about a decade. This its first foray into Web design services.

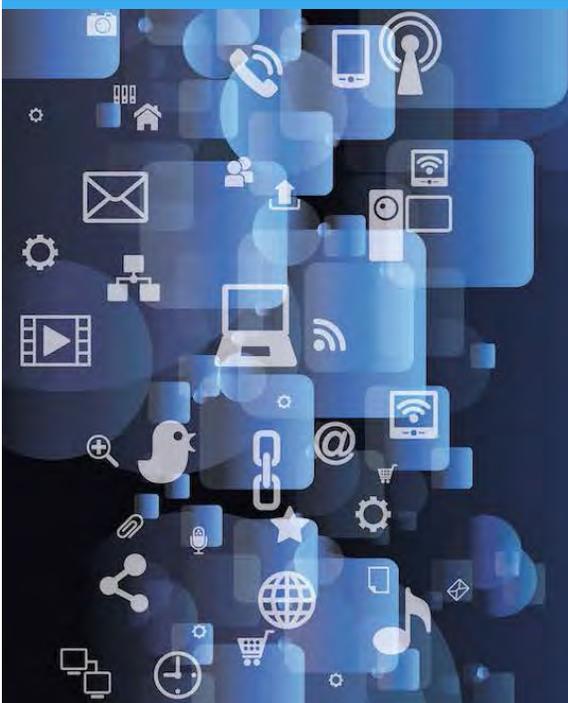
No, you can't buy a WingWire site with a week's worth of sofa change.

However, haven't we completely oversold the notion of cheap Web design? What does that say about the industry's demand for quality? I think it's time agents focus on service and consider paying for actual Internet marketing expertise.

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Do you use WingWire? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

AGENT EVOLUTION

TECHNOLOGY

Agent Evolution websites look good and do the right things — but so do many others

This adequate tool won't spark any revolutions



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 22, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

The Internet is catching up with the real estate industry. In fact, I think it's blown past it.

There was a time when you could get by with a very minimal Web presence.

Before Zillow and Trulia changed the game forever, realtor.com and Craigslist combined to serve as an adequate online presence for listings.

The former emerged at first to welcoming marketing budgets everywhere. Why invest in our own site when we have the major portals to carry the burden?

Then they started using your data against you. And everyone has just kind of been staring at each other since, mouth agape, wondering where it all went wrong.

Even in the midst of current upheaval, there's no collective industry standard on how agents should tackle online marketing. The dust remains airborne, maliciously swirling.

Granted, other than the folks who wrote "Wall-E," no one saw coming the face-in-your-device revolution. We are Web-everywhere. A billion websites are loaded and thumb-scrolled every minute. To catch even a flash of that attention, you need to commit to getting it right.

In short, now it's up to you to make tough, expensive marketing technology decisions. Buy a template? Get a tech-savvy intern? Didn't your daughter's friend do Web design?

You could also try [Agent Evolution](#).

The sale

Agent Evolution sells five WordPress templates to real estate agents for \$49.99. If that's all you want.

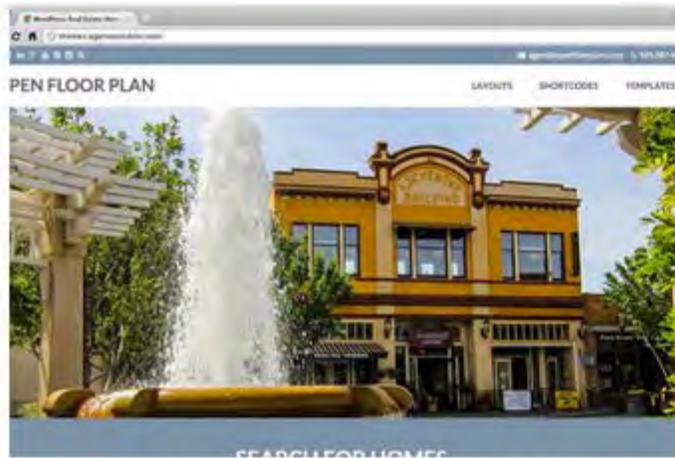
You can buy one of their real estate-ready templates and do the rest yourself. Domain transfer. Hosting. Installation. IDX (Internet data exchange) connection.

Each of the templates is based on the Equity Platform developed by IDX.

The Equity Platform is a foundation of code developed to power real estate websites. I've been trying to avoid car analogies, but here goes: It's like a car company using the same structural underpinnings for different cars. The Dodge Durango is the same underneath as the Jeep Grand Cherokee, for example.

The themes all look good and have every contemporary design trend represented. In each Agent Evolution website you'll find large upfront visuals, iconography, short codes, and

responsive video windows, among other features.



Open Floor Plan

\$49.99



Picture Perfect

\$49.99

For \$399, the Website package includes Agent Evolution building your site with one of their five templates. They'll connect your IDX account, too. You take on hosting and support is accessed through user forums.

Account holders also get a handful of plugins germane to an agent's needs, like a tool to build individual page listings called WP Listings, as well as WordPress' native SEO tool.

The last iteration of the Agent Evolution service is called Turnkey. You pay \$299 to get in the game and \$99 per month to keep playing. For that amount, they handle everything but content: hosting, site build, and IDX integration.



EDITABLE FOOTER

Modify footer sections, include shortcodes or add a disclaimer to personalize your site.



LAYOUT OPTIONS

Choose from 3 layouts on a page-by-page basis: full-width, content-sidebar, sidebar-content.



ICONS AND LOGOS

Add your own favicon, Apple touch icon, and company logo to show an attention to detail.



EDITOR STYLES

Dashboard editor shows your theme styling to better show how changes will look.

Value at this solution level is provided primarily through the IDX Platinum account.

This is a nice tool for an individual broker or small team to have on a website, because there's nothing more irksome than a convoluted home search interface.

Rest assured, Agent Evolution builds in robust search functionality and a coherent look so tire kickers won't do the same to their iPads.

The Plugin Suite (at both Website and Turnkey levels) is simply a curated list of common, albeit useful, plug-ins available to any WordPress user in the world.

LATEST BLOG POSTS



Post With Threaded Comments

This is an example of a WordPress post, you could edit this to put information about your site so readers know where you are coming from. Create as many posts as you like in order ... [Read More...](#)



Post With No Sidebar

This is an example of a WordPress post, you could edit this to put information about your site so readers know where you are coming from. Create as many posts as you like in order ... [Read More...](#)

Still, it's helpful to have them installed and functioning for you upon launch. Ultimately though, it's not unlike the bro at Foot Locker "throwing in the laces for free." Laces, too? Steal.

Keep in mind that in all iterations of Agent Evolution's service, content remains in your hands. Strong copy and click-grabbing content remain crucial. You're going to want to stay consistent on a blog, as they represent one of the few ways an agent can keep a site current.

Listings obviously bolster that, too.

The close

Agent Evolution will appeal to agents solely on it being owned and marketed by IDX. They say all the right industry things and broadcast the right industry message.

As a website company though, nothing here blows me away. I can scroll Sortfolio.com and find five more impressive solutions in two swipes.

It's affordable, of course. So there's that. The sites look good on browsers and mobile devices, but that's not what's hampering Agent Evolution's services, or any other agent website tool I've reviewed.

The primary issue is lack of innovation. Listings. Mobile-responsiveness. IDX. Map searches. People holding keys. Rinse. Repeat.

I guess we'll settle on evolution for now. Because I don't see a revolution on the horizon.

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Do you use Agent Evolution? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

BASECAMP

TECHNOLOGY

Basecamp makes massive projects manageable, and more agents should use it

Master project management with this popular all-purpose tool



STAFF by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 23, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

There's almost no end to the things we can use software to manage.

Customer Relationships.

Transactions.

Contacts.

Documents.

Emails.

Unfortunately, no one system is good at all of them. Some are good at a couple. A few are great at one of them, and plenty stink at all of them.

So where do we put **Basecamp**?

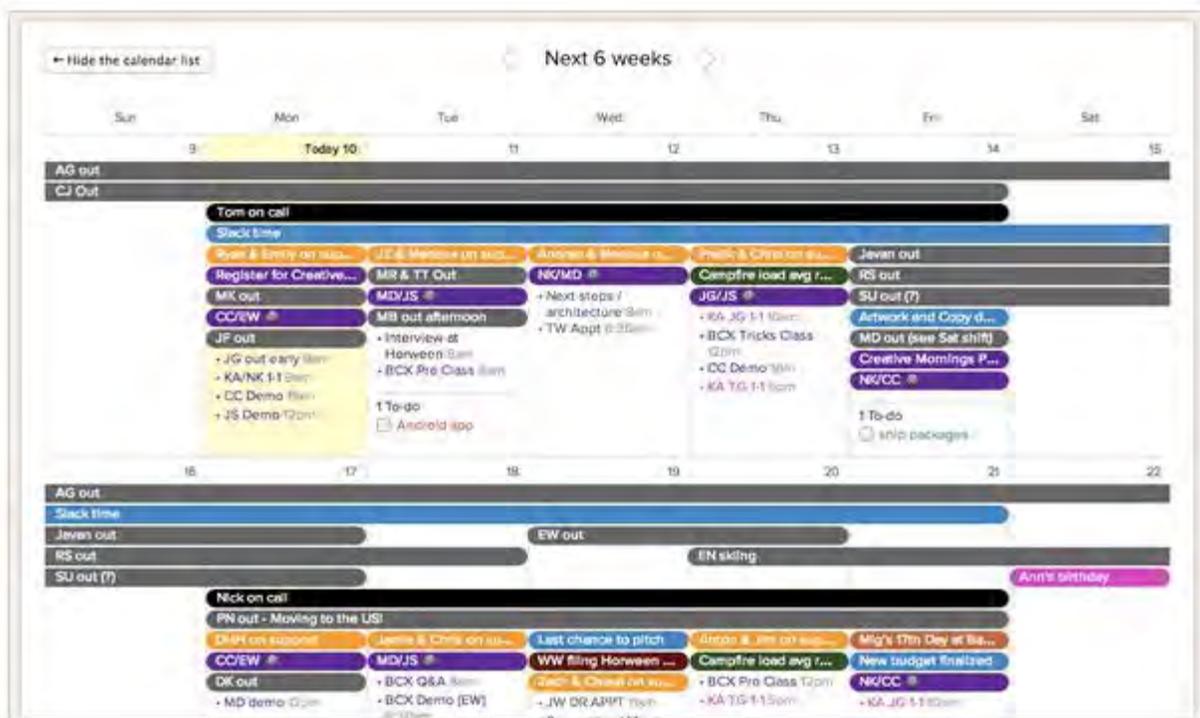
The sale

Basecamp was developed by website design company 37Signals that wanted a better way to manage projects.

So, is it a project manager? Maybe.

Agents should think of a project as a listing. You start by inviting team members, like an assistant and the office marketing professional, and even your clients.

Between the group, you can swap messages, upload and comment on files, write notes, type letters, assign due dates and build a calendar. You can also easily set permissions for who can see what documents or notes.



What I like about Basecamp is that you never need to leave its interface to advance the project. Information is shared within it, and the engagement points are many.

Files that are uploaded into a project are viewable only by those team members. There's no reason you can't upload copies of the listing agreement, drafts of marketing fliers, lot maps, restrictive covenants, as well as property pictures and videos.

There's a very tidy To-Do list tool. Build To-Do lists according to each phase of the project, e.g., a staging list, an open house list, a showing list. Assign tasks, make comments, and check 'em off. You can sort To-Dos according to who's responsible or when they're due.

Todo

- Costumes for the musical
- Call Raul about flower arrangement

Family Day name tags

Assigned to: Trevor Turk ▼
Due on: [No due date](#)
 [Attach files...](#)

Trevor will be notified by email.

Save changes
or [Cancel](#)

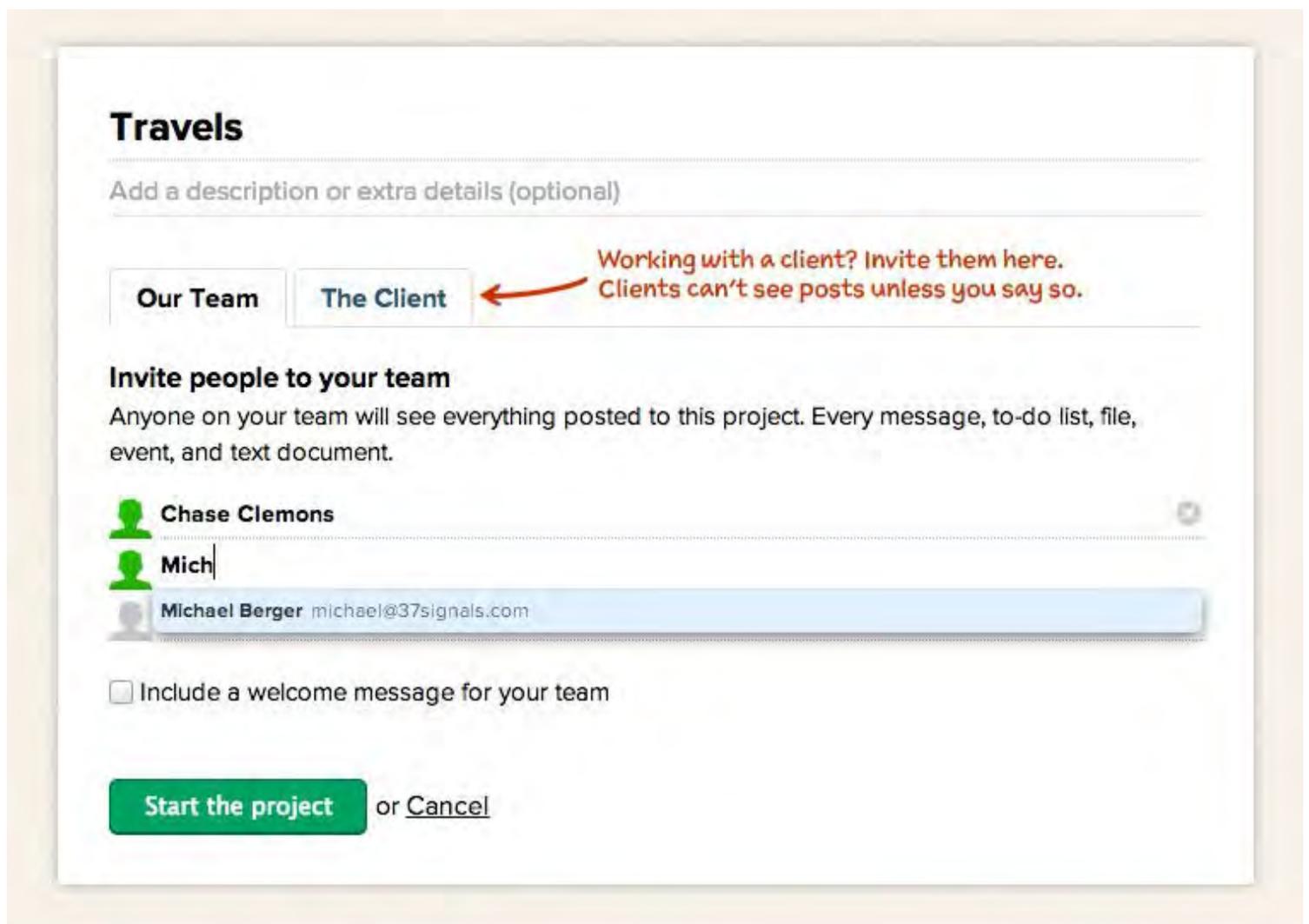


[Add a to-do](#)

Discussions is a great feature. Essentially a forum within a project, it's a place to create a topic and talk about it. If a Web page is being built for a listing, create a discussion about it, upload drafts, and invite the clients for feedback.

Setting access parameters for clients is simple. Basecamp even presents a number of prompts to ensure you're doing it correctly.

Again, everything is contained within Basecamp's clean, colorful user interface. There isn't a real estate-centric CRM (customer relationship manager) or transaction management tool that comes close to being able to juggle this much content in such a visually ergonomic fashion.



There's a Documents library in Basecamp, too. Word docs and PowerPoints and PDFs can all be uploaded and sorted and viewed.

Agents can do all this for multiple listings at one time, and that's when Basecamp excels. It keeps everything neatly sorted. Working in one project, you can choose to see nothing about the other projects, which could be immensely beneficial for busy teams.

Seeing the world, on the clock - draft

I left my newspaper job in 2007, in part because I wanted to go on a three-week road trip, in the spirit of the movie, Road Trip.

There was no way to accommodate my absence from office that long — working remotely was so completely out of the question that the possibility was never even mentioned — so I gave my notice, and the paper lost a valued (I think!) employee.

This year, when I told my boss I was thinking about going to Europe for the summer, his response was something to the effect of “oh, cool. Have fun.” When you’re already an offsite employee (my house is about 1,000 miles from the Chicago office), for a company that [extols the benefits of a remote team](#), it

Want to make changes?

[Edit this document](#)

Joan Stewart was the last person to edit this document 4 minutes ago ([See what changed](#)).

Version history

[Joan S. Jun 6 at 5:51pm](#)

[Kristin A. Jun 6 at 5:32pm](#)

[Joan S. Jun 6 at 5:31pm](#)

[Ann G. May 31 at 3:15pm](#)

Think about how many emails go back and forth on these issues. There’s a lot of value in having it all condensed into a single interface.

The close

I have not yet used Basecamp’s apps for iPad, iPhone and Android devices, so I can only speculate as to their functionality. Given the company’s software development prowess, I suspect you’ll be OK.

Basecamp has been around for the better part of a decade, and it’s used everywhere. The support is outstanding, and the learning curve is minimal. And yes, it’s fun to use.

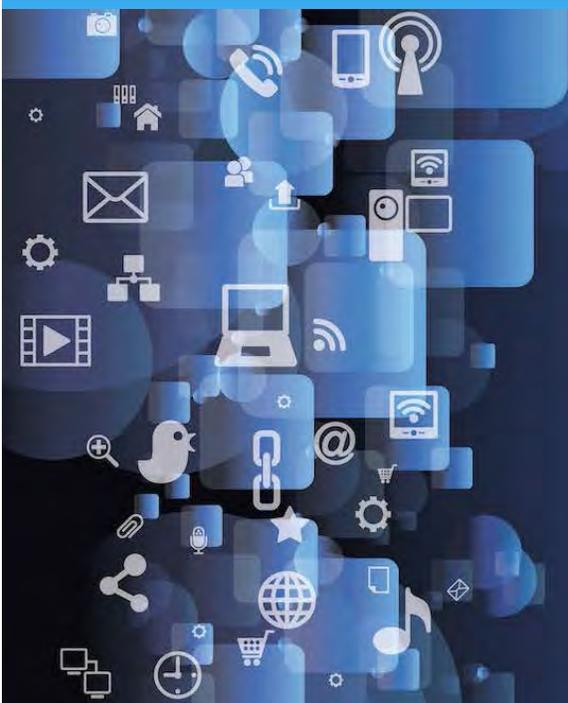
At \$20 per month for 10 active projects and 3 gigabytes of storage, Basecamp is easily affordable.

All that said, what do you think Basecamp manages? Emails? Projects? People? Or transactions?

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Do you use Basecamp? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe](#).



THE DAILY REAL ESTATE

TECH REVIEW:

HOMEKEEPR

TECHNOLOGY

HomeKeepr keeps agents in touch with clients after the close. But for how long?

This tool is a supplement, not a long-term marketing facet



STAFF

by [Craig Rowe](#) on Apr 24, 2015

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? [Email Craig Rowe](#).

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The pitch

I never recommend restaurants to people.

I tell them about places I've enjoyed, but I never say, "You must go."

You just never know if that's the night a server was served with divorce papers, or if the line cook forgot his hairnet.

Experiences vary. Service is up and down. Even the best chefs have bad nights.

If an agent is going to hinge their ongoing relationship with clients to the hopes of a consistently high level performance of a "preferred vendor," or service at their "favorite cafe," then I feel they're putting their brand at risk.

I feel you should never handcuff your brand to a performance outcome on which you don't have control.

This is what **HomeKeepr** does.

The sale

HomeKeepr is a home vendor recommendation app that agents gift to their clients.

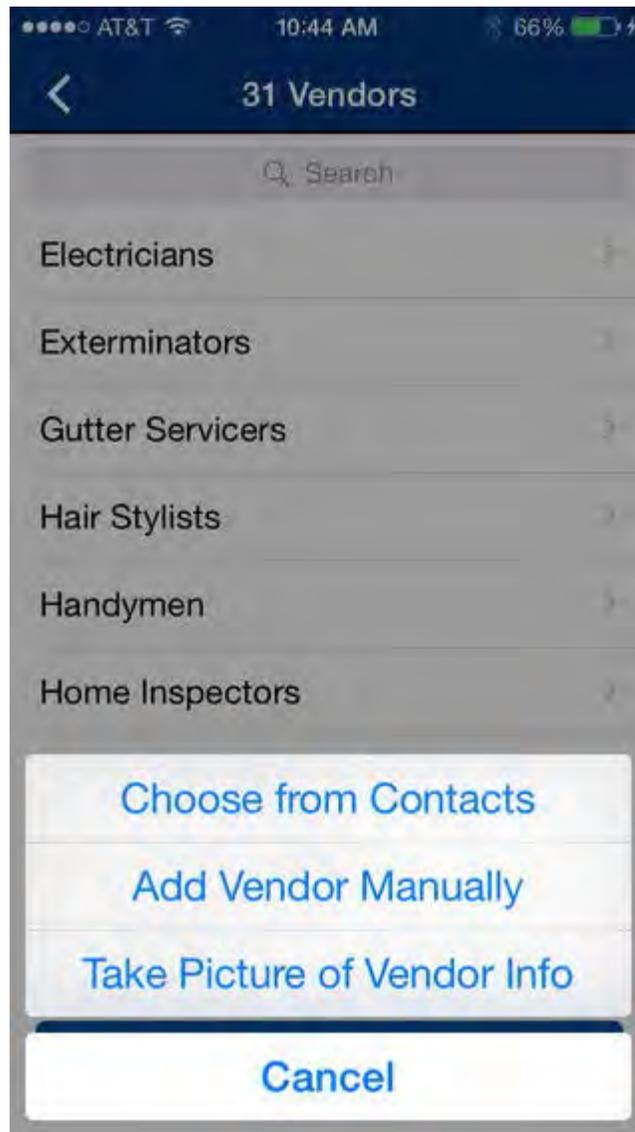
After a sale, you simply send them the link for download.

The app comes labeled with your headshot and contact information. HomeKeepr lets you send notes and updates about local events, and it automatically pushes home upkeep alerts to users.

The ultimate point here is to remain in front of your clients for the duration of their time spent in the house you sold them. And that's where I think HomeKeepr is fundamentally flawed.

I take no issue at all with the quality of the programming, the look and feel, or the initial effectiveness of the app. But six months after the close? A year?

I'm a skeptic.



I have a very hard time believing that in five years, that app is going to remain in place on users' phones, regardless of how many push notifications are sent out.

Almost weekly, I'm doing a quick scan of unused apps just for ways to free up some phone storage. Apps I thought were awesome last night turned out to be attractive icons with slow-to-load, buggy content under the tap.

If it's been three months since something's busted in the house, I kind of have an idea of what's not going to make it through the next app culling.

HomeKeepr looks to eliminate this out-of-touch-out-of-mind challenge by using a pre-ordained list of major home systems as a basis for sending maintenance reminders.

Users answer a few questions about heating and cooling, home location, roof type and floor materials, and HomeKeepr sends alerts when something should be flushed or finished.



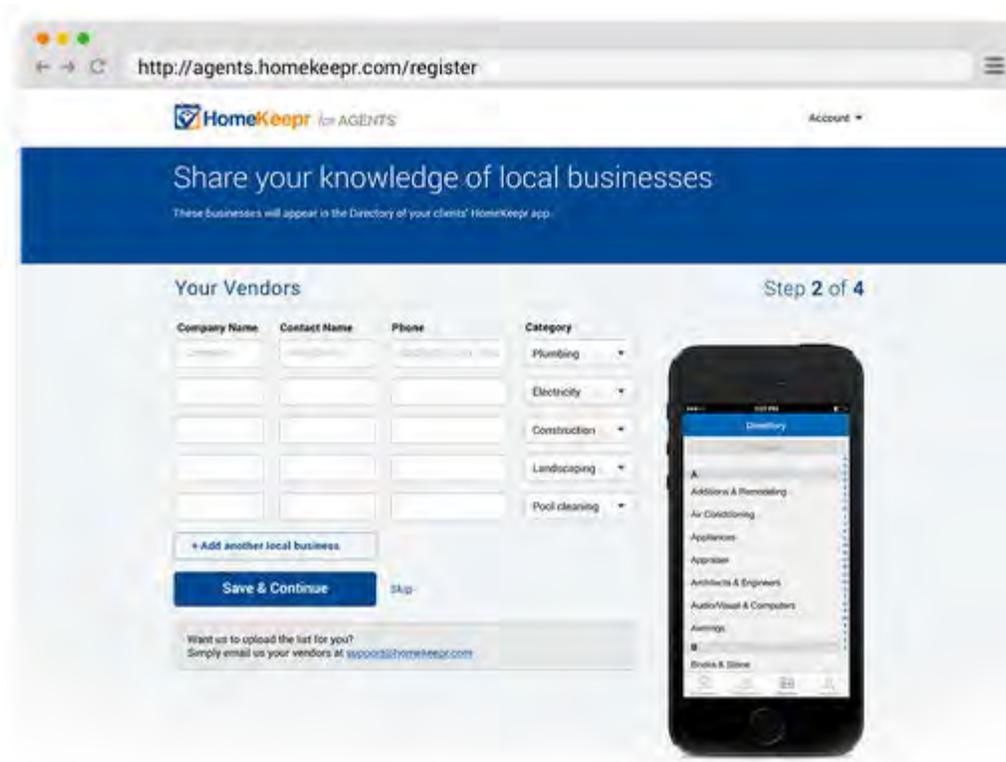
Users do have the option of turning off or limiting the notifications, however.

Still, I think the absolute best market for this app are first-time homeowners and buyers who have relocated.

There is no question that agents provide an invaluable service in providing relocation packages and names and numbers. From a marketing perspective, HomeKeepr makes an excellent, affordable value add. For a while.

Experienced homeowners moving within the same market may not be the best audience for your HomeKeepr app. For \$9.99, you get 100 clients, so you'll have some accounts to spare.

When agents log in, they see a clean dashboard with a recent run-down of how many vendors and clients you have, plus a tally of how many emails have been sent to clients. This is a good reminder of how active you should be.

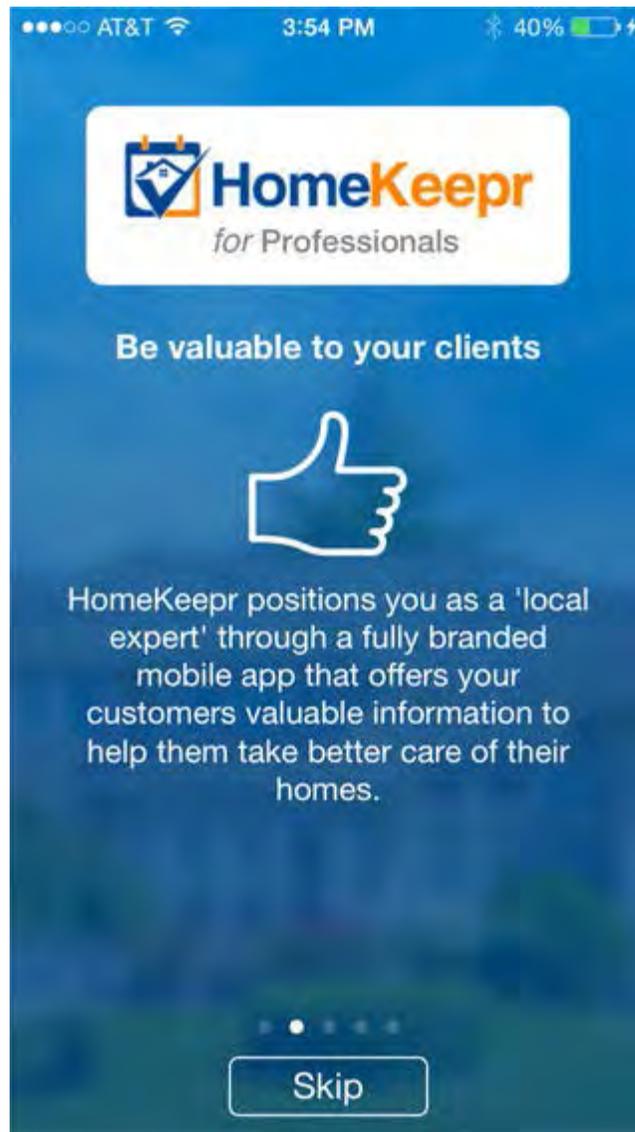


I wonder, though: How do emails sent in HomeKeepr get reconciled with a CRM (customer relationship manager), or other robust contact engine in use? It may not be crucial, but it does help to collate all touches to clients.

The app functions nicely. Maintenance recommendations are described in detail, along with tips on handling it yourself.

For more complex tasks, the preferred vendor for a repair is a couple of taps away. If for any reason one isn't set up, HomeKeepr swiftly generates an email for the user to ask for one. It's pretty smooth.

Agents can also provide alerts about local events and other nearby services, like soccer tournaments and physical therapists.



I owned a house for a long time. I was no where near as diligent in its upkeep as the app implies I should have been. I wonder, how many homeowners are more like me?

And I don't have kids who need rides to skateboard parks or high school drama events to attend.

The close

Again, HomeKeepr looks great. It functions well, too, even if its calendar of maintenance ideas is a bit presumptuous. I'm not inspecting my driveway.

With ongoing upgrades to the app and consistent attention by agents, it could work. [Localytics](#) reported in September 2014 that the percentage of apps used only once declined to 20 percent, down from 26 percent in 2010.

My issue is with its positioning as a long-term marketing facet for real estate agents. At best,

it's a supplement.

Mobile user habits alone dictate it would be three screens deep within a few months after closing. Plus, as soon as the first vendor is late to an appointment with a busy mom, there's going to be some trust issues.

I think agents should try HomeKeepr for new and relocating buyers. That's the best use of it. After six months to a year, make sure your CRM is working as it should.

And if you need a new CRM, I know a great technology column ...

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inbox!**

Do you use HomeKeepr? What do you think? Leave a comment and let us know!

Do you have a product for our tech expert to review? [Email Craig Rowe.](#)